THE COMMONWEAL

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ROME HAS SPOKEN

WRITING on the position of the Catholic clergy regarding birth control recently, Mr. H. L. Mencken said: "Officially they are still violently opposed to any form of contraceptive, however benign, but behind the door, as Havelock Ellis demonstrated, they are already prepared for discreet retreat in case the faithful show signs of rebellion." Havelock Ellis is, of course, one of the high gods of the new paganism. Indeed, he seems to be considered by his faithful followers to enjoy an authority approaching omnipotence in all matters having to do with demoralization of sexual habits and ideas. But in this particular instance, he seems to have listened at the wrong door. He must have got the information which Mr. Mencken relied upon with such touching if naive faith at Lambeth, rather than at Rome. It is true, however, that Havelock Ellis was only one of many apostles of the new paganism who have been assuring their followers, and the world at large, that the Catholic Church was preparing to give up its old-fashioned notions regarding the sanctity of marriage. Well, such false prophets have received their answer. Over an editorial discussion of the Pope's encyclical, the New York *Times* has the caption: "Roma Dixit." We suspect that the *Times's* Latinist probably had vaguely in mind another and much better known ascription: "Roma Locuta Est. Causa Finita Est." For Rome has not merely spoken certain words, more or less at random, expressing mere opinions. Rome has spoken, and the case is closed.

But, of course, there never was a case, in this matter, so far as the three to four hundred million Catholics in the world were or are concerned. No Catholic having the slightest real knowledge of his or her religion, together with even a minimum of loyalty to it, ever believed or could have believed that the Church could retreat from the position it has held since the beginning of its history. Therefore, no such Catholic is in any degree surprised or disappointed or chagrined. The Pope's encyclical is simply what every Pope has said, and must say, and will continue to say when or if the need arises for the restatement of the unchangeable, irreformable laws of morality.

Among the clamorous champions of the new paganism who were interviewed in the New York press the day following the publication of the encyclical, there was one, the Reverend Elliot White, who expressed an opinion with which—when due allowance is made for a somewhat natural exaggeration of statement—

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both Catholics and non-Catholics may well agree. The Reverend Mr. White is the Protestant Episcopal clergyman who became so prominent recently because of his fervent support of Judge Ben Lindsey against Bishop Manning. Moreover, as he told the press at the time of that controversy, Mr. White sanctioned the trial marriage of his own daughter. He may then fairly be taken as a completely typical exponent of the philosophy and practice of companionate marriage, facile divorce and legalized birth control. When asked his opinions regarding the Pope's condemnation of these things, Mr. White said: "I am glad that this pronouncement is so thoroughly clear cut and uncompromising. Every reader or hearer must be either for or against it. A middle ground is completely demolished by it. This is the most important encyclical ever promulgated during the entire history of the papal succession."

Without going all the way with Mr. White in the concluding sentence of this quotation, we think that he has justly described the decisive clarity of the encyclical. So did Will Rogers, who remarked: "When you read what he says you do not have to start wondering or ask your reader what he meant. He says what he meant." That is so. The Pope says what he means, and he means what the Church means; and that, all Catholics believe to be nothing other than what God means.

The Reverend Mr. White, however, goes on to predict a vast revolt of American Catholics, whom he describes as being rebellious in heart against what Mr. White declares to be the tyranny of ecclesiastics over the personal conduct of the men and women committed to their spiritual jurisdiction. We are inclined to believe that Mr. White is as badly informed on this point as was Havelock Ellis. The Catholic laity, of course, know that ecclesiastics have nothing to do with making the moral law. Only God can do that. All members of the Church, from Pope and bishops and priests down to the humblest member of the laity, are precisely on the same footing as concerns the main relation of mankind to the moral law—namely, the duty of obedience. Of course, ecclesiastics have the further duty of teaching the law. They have jurisdiction in its administration over those who recognize their authority. If or when Catholics disobey the moral law—not merely in matters concerning sex relations, but in any other matter—and if they do not repent and make amendment, they themselves cut themselves off from the Church. They are not rebelling—when they do rebel—against ecclesiastics, any more than people who commit a secular crime rebel against the judges of the law courts. It is law that is rebelled against in both instances; in one, the human law; in the other, the divine. To talk of the tyranny of ecclesiastics in such a connection is to miss the whole point at issue. If a man jumps out of a skyscraper window, he is not a victim of the tyranny of the builders of the skyscraper; by his own will he is making a test of the law of gravity.

That there are many Catholics who are disobeying the moral law in this particular phase of it, and many more who are walking the way of danger—is, of course, common knowledge, and the Pope himself explicitly says so. Obviously, that fact is one of the chief reasons for the issuance of the encyclical. It is equally to be taken for granted that the bishops to whom the encyclical is addressed, and who share with the Supreme Bishop the awful responsibility of guarding humanity's respect for and obedience to moral law, will take appropriate measures to deal with the problem presented by this situation: the double problem, first, of uncompromisingly proclaiming and teaching the law; and, second, the more delicate and difficult task of dealing with the delinquents or the tempted, who for the most part are not wilfully rebellious but who have been overcome in a greater or lesser degree by the insidious and all-pervading influence of the immoral atmosphere in which today most people have to live, and by the terrible pressure of economic injustice.

Such matters as the teaching of the moral law, and the administration of the sacrament of penance pertain of course to the clergy—but there is one fundamental factor of the complex problem dealt with by the Father of Christendom in which the Catholic laity not only can—if they will—give to their bishops and pastors a support to which they are absolutely entitled, but which it is also their strict duty to render. We refer to the action which the laity can and should take in the matter of striving to reform the bitterly unjust and wholly unnecessary pressure of the economic hardships which drive millions of fathers and mothers into temptation or even into rebellion against the moral laws concerning the sacrament of marriage. The Pope himself gives us the principles of such a program of action. He has repeatedly and urgently called upon the laity to take their part in making it a reality. Not since the issuance of Leo XIII's encyclical on the subject has the world listened to a more powerful statement on the relation between economic injustice and moral problems. But due to many causes, in particular to the fact of the universal crisis which today faces the world, Pius XI should be heeded even more than Leo XIII. For the case is more urgent now. We are witnessing today the fulfilment of what Leo XIII declared must happen if the moral laws of justice and charity were not applied to the economic struggle. We are threatened by social catastrophe.

Here is what the Pope says—and it is the Magna Carta of social action: "Since it is no rare thing to find that the perfect observance of God's commands and conjugal integrity encounter difficulties because the married parties are oppressed by straitened circumstances, their necessities must be relieved as far as possible. So in the first place an effort should be made to obtain that which our predecessor, Leo XIII, of happy memory, has already required, namely, that in the state such economic and social methods should be set up as will enable every head of a family to earn as

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much as according to his station in life is necessary for himself, his wife, and for the rearing of his children, for 'the laborer is worthy of his hire.' To deny this or to make light of what is equitable is a grave injustice and is placed among the greatest sins by holy writ; nor is it lawful to fix such a scanty wage as will be insufficient for the upkeep of the family in the circumstances in which it is placed."

The carrying of this principle into action would go far to lessen not only the evil of birth control but also many other evils which are disrupting the peace and prosperity of society.

WEEK BY WEEK

RECENT addresses by Mussolini have for their purpose the restoration of general confidence in the future of Italy. It is encouraging to observe that they are accepted by relatively quite diverse groups as frank and factual statements of the truth. Americans who have lived in the country for many years believe, for example, that while not all the economic experiments of Fascismo have produced beneficial results, the nation as a whole confronts no radically serious crisis. Perhaps half a million citizens are without employment, though these figures make no allowance for the large standing army and the huge groups employed more or less irregularly in the construction of public works. The automotive industry has suffered especially marked reverses, and export trade is of course affected by the world-wide decline of purchasing power. These matters are no trifles, but so far the social atmosphere in Italy has none of the tenseness prevalent in Germany. In its endeavors to reckon with the current depression the government has endorsed conclusions arrived at more or less generally throughout Europe. Like Chancellor Bruening, Il Duce has started a campaign for price reduction. The stores in almost all the large cities announce that goods are now to be 10 percent cheaper. Since there are almost no fixed prices, however, it is quite impossible to see whether the Italian householder can really live on less. The ultimate hope is, of course, that decreased production costs will show to advantage in the competition incident to export trade. One thinks the chances for the materialization of this rainbow are comparatively remote, since many Italian industries have long been operating on the slenderest of profit margins, and since practically all of Europe has adopted a similar policy.

Italy and the New Year

THERE is a great deal of political talk everywhere in Mussolini land. To begin with, currents of opposition to the Fascist claim are stronger if still subterranean. A feeling is prevalent in many circles that the dictatorship has accomplished its work and that it is now without objectives or instrumentalities of more than ordinary appeal. None of the antagonistic elements seems ready, however, to take an immediately decisive step. They appear to be content with a policy of watchful waiting and to be fortified with confidence in normal political evolution. Vastly more in the foreground are the military problems and possibilities. All Italy is united in the feeling that with France to the west and Jugoslavia to the east, the risks are very great and marked sacrifices for security inevitable. Much is being done even before the eyes of the casual observer. The army is ultra-modern and exceedingly well trained, defenses against aircraft have multiplied, and the northwest frontier has been put into a partial state of readiness. So far as one is able to judge, Fascismo confronts the prospect of another war with grave uneasiness and a complete absence of militaristic bombast. Even the work of the army indicates that the object is far more the defense of the country against invasion than any species of conquest. As a whole, indeed, the Italy of today is refreshingly free of the megalomania which figures in some of the oratory thought, in many quarters outside the country, to be representative of it.

A MAN with a boil on his neck is hardly to be consoled by an optimist who says to him, "You're not so badly off; think of it, less than one-tenth of one percent of your body is represented by that boil. In other words, you are ninety-nine and nine-tenths all right. Physically speaking, you ought to consider yourself in a state approaching very nearly perfect bliss." In all our sensibilities—personal, national, and news—perhaps we are too often like the man with the boil: we have a way of concentrating on the sore spots. This does not mean to imply that we advocate that self-delusion that would deny the sores; but we do think a little exercise in considering the better parts and prospects is to be recommended. The case in point is Poland. The world through the sounding board of the League of Nations is hearing a great deal at present about Polish mistreatment of national minorities in Upper Silesia and the Danzig Corridor. If there are sores here, certainly they must be opened and cleaned. But because of them, the greatness of Poland on which they are but minor excrescences, must not be lost sight of, nor must suggestions of involving the innocent body of the people in war be tolerated.

Poland's Due Proportion

IT WOULD seem to us that the really big news should be that this nation that was obliterated for 150 years and politically and economically the prey of merciless aliens, should have achieved in 12 years the degree of stable government and economic effectiveness that it has. In December Poland paid to the United States $4,500,000 as an instalment on her consolidated debt to us. Her foreign trade through Danzig has increased the total passing through that port 400 percent, in comparison to the last pre-war year,

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and at the same time Poland has built up the port of Gdynia from a town which had 10 commercial and 19 industrial concerns in 1924 to a city which in 1930 had 363 commercial firms and 283 industrial establishments. She ranks fourth among the nations of Europe in the exportation of coal. In view of present business depression, she has curtailed government expenditures by over six million dollars in the budget for the forthcoming year. To have achieved all that she has, situated as Poland is between hostile and disturbing Russia on one side of her, and a hurt, unfriendly Germany, a nation that is a marvel of industrial efficiency and therefore of competitiveness, on the other side of her, is evidence of an essential soundness in the Polish nation which deserves our respect. If these are material things that we have spoken of, the story of her heroes and the heroic faith of her people are not out of mind because they are not mentioned.

Icons into Idols

IT IS improbable that the authorities of the Metropolitan Museum of Art gave much thought to the matter of where and how the collection of religious paintings, known as icons, loaned to it by the Soviet government of Russia, was originally obtained. No doubt, purely aesthetic and educational motives supplied them with sufficient reasons for their action. One defender of the museum puts the case as it will seem to many others: "In the museum we see before our very eyes the bygone ages and the most distant places. A collection of icons will show us how the conception of Divinity presented itself in its various forms through the mysterious craftsmanship of man." As another defender of the Metropolitan puts it: "If it is art, it doesn't matter in the least who wrought it, or who instigated it, or even who stole it." This type of art lover will see and no doubt be more or less deeply moved by the sacred paintings of the historic Church of Russia. He will also be glad that the Soviet government took measures to preserve them for the benefit of lovers of art and students of archaeology. He will not see or think about the hundreds of ravished and desecrated churches, and the thousands of murdered priests, from which and from whom these exquisitely beautiful things were stolen by the Bolsheviks. All those considerations are irrelevant; they belong not to the present, but to "bygone ages and the most distant places."

THERE are other voices raised, however, in the letters of protest published in the New York *Times* and the *Herald Tribune,* which refer to "the singular lack of propriety in a public and educational institution sponsoring the anti-religious acts of a government which will go down in history as the most relentless persecutor of religion ever known." Similar remarks display a sensitiveness which must seem very naive and crude to those whose sensibilities are most tender to artistic impressions, but for whom the religious motives which led to the creation of the icons, and which for centuries prompted their veneration, are simply silly and old-fashioned. In short, the icons have become idols, venerated in the name of art, by those to whom human art is more important than the God Who inspired the artists. Their preservation and exhibition by the organized atheists of Moscow one is tempted to place at the top of the many bizarre paradoxes which are presented by our topsy-turvy times.

Senate and President

THE ACTION of the Senate in demanding the return for further consideration of the confirmations already granted by it to the President's appointments to the Power Commission is so extraordinary a performance, that only the presentation, by the insurgent Republicans and the Democrats who support their action, of positive proof that the commissioners are really tools of the so-called Power Trust can possibly justify their action. Either the Senate acted with conspicuous negligence in granting their confirmation, or else their motives are purely political in the least honorable sense of that much-abused word. That is to say, if the insurgent bloc is simply attempting to embarrass President Hoover's 1932 candidacy, without due regard for the present necessity for dealing with much more pressing and practical problems, it is to be hoped that Mr. Hoover's appeal to the public for support against the Senate will be promptly and emphatically expressed. We have no disposition to minimize the power problem, as such. That control of the sources and disposition of giant power is a matter of vital concern to the whole nation, is obvious; and the question of whether that power is to be controlled primarily for private profits should have the fullest and most unrestricted investigation. But the present action of the insurgent bloc does not tend to create confidence in their judgment or their method in dealing with so grave an issue. Putting—or trying to put—the President in a political hole seems a petty and futile way to approach a great question of public policy. The burden of proof that they have an adequate reason for their action seems to rest upon the Senators.

Labor's neo-Franciscan

ABOUT those who use what are, in their integrity, supernatural virtues, for merely natural ends, there hangs always a touch of the unreal; and they are apt, in their results, to pay the penalty exacted of unreality. Thus, pacifists turning the other cheek from the merely humanitarian wish to stop war, are in danger of breeding up a race of cowards. Thus, those who teach forgiveness without a correlative charity, merely train hypocrites, or put a premium on that feeble moral stamina which cannot even support a grudge. When James Maxton the "Clydesider," leader of Labor's intransigents in Parlia-

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ment, avers that he refused an LL.D. "because I feel that anything that tends to mark out a man from other men should not be acceptable to a Socialist," the statement seems to fall into the same class. About Mr. Maxton personally we know nothing, and his attitude is too lofty to deserve derision: though we do permit ourselves to say that it seems to us that a man who practises a Franciscan abnegation from less than the Franciscan motive is being a saint in the wrong place: he is fantastically humbling himself before something that, by definition, isn't there. But on the broader aspects of his pronouncement we really are drawn to meditate. There is his attitude toward his own theory: it does not rest with Socialists to mark men out from their fellows; God and nature did that, and if Socialism cannot admit it and survive, it seems to us a disastrous confession. And there is this practical point: that if you found a state denying any group of men, even Socialists, the legitimate and innocent distinctions symbolized by, say, the LL.D. degree, they will inevitably take it out in some other way, perhaps not so legitimate or innocent: they may organize a secret committee of spies, like the Krypteia of Sparta, or an all-powerful under-cover police, like the Ogpu of the present-day Russia—or even a band of clowning tyrants, like the Southern Klan.

Jefferson's Teaching

IT IS perhaps an unanswerable question whether our increasing political centralization represents the will of the people, or their more or less helpless acquiescence. This much at least is certain, that it represents the habit of the people. A superorganized, wealthy and above all publicized civilization like ours runs almost automatically to centralization as a corrective for its woes. The problems of corruption entrenched or power swollen beyond bounds are often too great to be dealt with locally; and even where they are not too great, they are apt to be so troublesome and dangerous that the temptation to pass the buck to some larger unit of responsibility—the state or, most often, the nation—is very great. And this relegation of local activity and local duty, both in the instances where it is merely convenient, and in the instances where it is indisputably necessary, develops a sort of nerve tract in the public mind with which we are all familiar, and in the workings of which we all, to some extent, share. Democrats and Republicans alike partake in the tendency to waive local duties and prerogatives. It is true that Democratic leaders have never been lacking to reiterate the principle of state rights and high local autonomy; but the cleavage, generally speaking, is no longer political. Both parties have their extremists, whose views of the functions of central government are very little more moderate than those of Socialists. And on the other side, both have voters who, even while they admit the tendency, try to temper it or reverse it. In other words, both have their practising Jeffersonians, although those of the major party probably designate themselves by some other name.

THESE facts operate to give Governor Roosevelt's fine inaugural address something less, and something more, than its face value as the manifesto of a re-elected Democrat. In so far as the doctrine of a high local autonomy has remained articulate in his party, he is speaking officially for Democrats. In so far as there have been considerable—if largely unformulated—defections from the doctrine, there are numerous Democrats for whom he does not speak. But he is certainly not airing the views of a doctrinaire clique. He does speak for an important and, we think, growing section of thoughtful liberal opinion throughout the country, drawn often from political indifferentists or his own party foes. When he warns, with illustrations drawn from his immediate experience, against "the easy road of centralization of authority, lest we discover too late that our liberties have disappeared," he is expressing an uneasiness that is growing independently in the minds of many men whose unique importance is that they care more about political principle than about their hereditary party affiliations, whatever they are. These men know that the test of political health is the readiness of the individual and the community to receive responsibility. They know that, if that readiness is atrophied, if the habit of getting out from under, what the governor calls "the unconscious willingness to accept a czar or absolute dictator" continues to grow, representative government here is dying. They know that, if the sense of local and personal responsibility is kept alive, it matters little what emergency help the central government may be called in, of necessity, to render. They know, in short, that the key to the country is the separate citizen. Is it entirely impossible that the "political realignment" of which we begin to hear, the "new party" that many prophets think they see on the way, will crystallize, not about tariffs or power boards or foreign policies, but about this citizen: his rescue from the suction created by a powerful national machinery, his rehabilitation in political thinking and in the bearing of burdens?

WHISTLING IN THE DARK

IT IS genuinely good news to know that Archbishop Curley of Baltimore was so favorably impressed with the results of the regional meeting of the Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems, held at Washington, D. C., in December, that he plans to hold a similar meeting in Baltimore. Although the meeting in Washington was accompanied by more newspaper publicity than ordinarily is the case with these regional meetings, because of the presence of prominent individuals such as the Secretary of Labor, representing the President's Cabinet, it is probable that more practical opportunities will be afforded in a great industrial city like Baltimore to carry out the real purposes of

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the Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems than was the case at the capital. Newspaper publicity is not the standard by which the work of the conference can be judged. Undoubtedly, such publicity has a certain useful purpose in arousing public interest, particularly among Catholics, who perhaps need an arousing more than others; but it is the quiet, unreported, yet fruitful educational work which is accomplished by these regional meetings that justifies the unremitting labors of the conference. It is one more great proof of the indispensable usefulness both to the Catholic Church and to the nation as a whole of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, which sponsors and directs these industrial studies. We have no doubt that under the vigorous inspiration of Archbishop Curley the coming meeting in Baltimore will be among the most notable so far held.

It is also good news that representatives of the Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems are to unite with representatives of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and other religious groups, in a joint meeting to be held in Washington to discuss the national economic crisis. Just at present the public mind is being subjected to an enormous pressure of publicity; a great deal of which strikes us as being a purely manufactured product, turned out according to the best mass-production models, and most of which might be described as "whistling in the dark." It is intended to be practical optimism. It is supposed to stir up the failing courage and sinking hearts of all good Americans, so that they will throw away their fears and thereby dispel the depression weighing so heavily on the country. A distinguished visitor to our shores, Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton, has been describing the effect that this manufactured optimism has been having on his mind. Writing for his own journal in London, *G. K.'s Weekly,* he says: "In America I have found nearly everybody worth talking about talking Distributism; except those utterly miserable, hopeless, desperate and blind with their despair, who are talking optimism. They have fallen back on certain savage rites, exactly as a savage tribe does in times of pestilence or famine; and the antics of their medicine men are far less dignified than the Red Indians. They tie talismans to their coats, on which is written, 'Trade is good'; or solemnly bury an old woman dressed in black and labeled 'Mrs. Pessimism.' It is identically the mood of eclipse or panic in which men have offered human sacrifice; or tried by such stiff dances of agony to appease the angry gods. But I did not mean to dwell on anything so depressing as the dismal sect of the optimists. They do not really represent the mind of America; especially where America really has a mind."

We may say for the benefit of those of our readers who may not be so familiar with Distributism as those with whom Mr. Chesterton has talked, that it means Mr. Chesterton's own answer to the problem which all the world is facing today. He believes that only by a deliberate abandonment of mass production, and stopping the rush from the farms to the factories by leading people back to the farms, and permitting them to own the farms themselves, will the world find its way back to a safe and sane society. This may be taken perhaps as a very rough and inadequate sketch of Distributism, and we do not propose to discuss the question of whether it is the right answer. But, at any rate, it is an answer; one for which Mr. Chesterton is perfectly ready to supply many good reasons. But whether he is right or wrong in his belief in Distributism, we think there can be no question that he is right in thinking that nothing but wrong can come from the preaching of a facile and foolish mind-cure philosophy. We are anything but fatalists on this paper. We are committed by our fundamental religious principles to a firm and practical belief in the freedom of the human will, and the efficacy of such a spiritual virtue as hope. Therefore, we have deep and sincere respect for all those who in this period of depression encourage the people to hope for a better future; to work for it; not to yield to vain fears, and to face the future with faith.

But the hullabaloo of hypnotic slogans and manufactured and highly adulterated optimism deserves all the contempt poured out upon it so scornfully by Mr. Chesterton. And it should be added that those who are predicting the break-up of civilization and the impending crash of our capitalistic society, and similar catastrophes, are almost as silly as the whistlers in the dark. Sensible people will take a middle position. They will certainly do their best to determine not to be led astray by either the croakers or the cheer leaders. But just as certainly they will pay heed to such an experienced social worker as Miss Colcord, who, in the foreword to the report on "Community Planning in Unemployment Emergencies," published by the Russell Sage Foundation, says: "To the thoughtful citizen, who has lived through several industrial depressions, it is disheartening to realize how little we seem to retain of the experience of one crisis to help us attack the next." Miss Colcord has in mind the special problems of immediate relief for the poor, the sick and the hungry. Every social emergency has for its first need the relief of such as these. Yet, as she says, emergency relief methods, created in a hurry and applied almost in a panic spirit, disrupt many of the normal channels of relief, and fundamentally the situation is not improved. The same lesson applies to the greater problems of the industrial crisis as a whole. It is imperative that thorough consideration should be given to these problems even in the midst of the storm and stress of their immediate urgency. Perhaps no greater disaster could befall us than the onset of another great period of material prosperity based upon the same false principles which caused similar periods in the past, before the intelligent mind of America has had the time to study the fundamental problems in the revealing light of present conditions.

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THE TROUBLE WITH OUR WORLD

By JOHN MOODY

The president of one of the oldest and most widely-trusted firms which investigate industrial concerns and give expert and impartial counsel on the financial position of the concerns as a basis for the investment of capital, must necessarily be a practical man. It was therefore of keen interest to us that, prompted by an editorial appearing in THE COMMONWEAL, *he should from his practical experience substantiate the principle that any social or economic system attempting to survive in disregard of the fundamental rules of Christian morality, will quickly become anti-social and destroy itself.—The Editors.*

THE BUSINESS depression and unsettlement of 1930 may, perhaps, go down in economic history as not unusual or extraordinary. A decade or two hence, the panic of 1929 and the resultant depression of 1930 may be listed in the business books as other panics and depressions have been listed: as the inevitable reaction from a long period of unexampled prosperity and overenthusiasm—the normal swinging of the business pendulum.

But are there not characteristics connected with the condition of the whole Western world today which can hardly be fully explained by the conventional custom of pointing to past experience and examining similar periods? Have there really been any similar periods in modern times?

Sir Charles Addis of London, at a dinner which was recently given by New York bankers where he was the guest of honor, stated in the course of his remarks that we are now in the midst of a world-wide economic depression such as has not been seen for a hundred years; and Thomas L. Chadbourne of New York, at the Brussells sugar conference a short time ago, made the assertion that the whole capitalistic system is on trial and in danger.

These are sufficiently serious statements to startle an uneasy public consciousness. Such assertions were never before made so openly by outstanding financial and commercial leaders. The usual attitude of the big business leader in times of trouble, when giving out opinions for public consumption, is to minimize the dangers and magnify the hopes. But here are two men who have been telling the truth openly; and there are others, at home and abroad, who have been giving voice to the same sort of thing.

Most of the financial and business pundits who so openly point out the dangers of the day, also present their remedies. The financier or banker sees the remedy in broader banking measures, in the proper distribution of credit; the commercial mind sees it in trade agreements looking to the stabilization of prices, to the curtailment of output and other measures of the sort. Such measures have, in the past, sooner or later restored confidence, revived hope; and the resulting psychological change in the mind of the great consuming public has started the wheels of industry and once more made possible the smooth working of credit instruments. Though panics and depressions raise havoc with all classes of people, causing forced liquidation, failures and bankruptcies, and wipe out the savings of millions, yet "hope springs eternal in the human breast," and a change in mass psychology will work wonders. Thereafter a new period of prosperity slowly gets under way, and then the circle is repeated once more —revival, prosperity, expansion, speculation, inflation, crash and depression.

This rule, with the economists, is as dogmatically held as that of the behaviorist who sees all life as clean-cut action and reaction, whether muscular or mental; and the sober present-day economic pundit will assert, with the greatest confidence, that the present state of the world is the normal reaction from its state of two years ago and will cure itself just as all similar troubles have cured themselves in the past. There is no difference, it is claimed, between this depression and previous ones; and to prove this assertion, precedents galore are produced.

The trouble now seems to be, however, that the economic doctors are keeping their noses so close to the musty books and records of precedents, that they give no weight to certain more fundamental causes of the present world catastrophe which are clearly apparent to the common man. For the true causes go far deeper than any normal and doctrinaire reaction from ebullient prosperity to discouraging depression.

The most fundamental cause of all lies in our modern gospel of success: the doctrine that the highest aim in life should be to acquire a multitude of material things; to rise on the ladder to opulence; to measure the worth of everything by its money value. This has been the alpha and omega to the average American youth of the past generation; it sticks out from every quarter in business life today. It began in America with our fathers, but not until the great "big business" age came in, with its growing crop of multimillionaires, with its modernism in all walks of life, and with its "power of plenty" philosophy, did it influence the public consciousness so vastly as it does today. The feverish scramble for wealth, the greed, the belief that success must be measured by money and money only, is at the bottom of practically all the ills of our time.

We humans are selfish brutes, quite naturally; it is far easier to be selfish than the reverse. Progress and success in this enlightened age of ours should lead to and promote the higher attributes; but modern progress, as taught in our schools and colleges, as lauded to the skies by the average practical-minded American, largely means the high and expert development of acquisitiveness and financial finesse. Ac-

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quisitiveness and cupidity are by no means new attributes in man; we have always had them; but never before to so wide an extent have they become the main article of the human creed. Never before has greed for wealth manifested itself as it has in this generation.

To illustrate this, let us turn back to certain events of the World War days. America not only emerged from the war the wealthiest nation in the world, but jumped to a state of affluence and power which she could not have reached in fifty years of peace. Almost overnight she became the one great creditor nation of the world, while all her former rivals for place and power were set back in their financial and economic life at least a generation. Her people (particularly that backbone, big business) made profits out of the war which far offset all the costs, and all the credits granted to the Allies to enable them to purchase war supplies in America. Had America charged off, at the end of the conflict, every cent she had advanced the Allies, she would still have been rich beyond the dreams of avarice and would have retained every commercial advantage. In fact, looking at the matter from a selfish viewpoint alone, it would have paid America handsomely to have cancelled the inter-Allied debts in 1919, for had she done this she would have made, during the following decade, more money through expanding trade than the entire debts amounted to.

Moreover, Europe would have been given a fighting chance to get on her feet; the reparation and other problems would have been settled far sooner and far more equitably; and Europe today, instead of being overburdened as she is with heart-breaking taxes, social unrest and fear of the future, would be in a far stronger position to face this world-wide economic depression.

But modernistic America did not understand unselfishness or generosity after the war had been won; no not even enlightened self-interest. The modern temper in America was, and is, too selfish, too short-sighted, too narrow-minded. Though there were groups of Americans ten years ago who saw the wisdom and worth of liquidating the war in a broad, constructive way (just as there then was a certain public opinion that wanted us to join the League of Nations and at least make genuine gestures for world peace on a high plane), greed and selfishness promptly crushed all that sentiment out. And with the régime of normalcy which was ushered in shortly after the thoroughly "modern" Harding entered the White House, any impulses for constructive programs went a-glimmering.

Then came our seven-year financial orgy in America, when we gradually became so busy getting rich that we had less and less time for the things of the spirit, no time at all to remember that success means something higher and better than doubling one's income, forgetting completely that progress and prosperity should mean growth in something more than bodily needs or creature comforts and satisfactions.

Gradually the greed for money and more money took possession of our whole population; the reckless spending mania followed; speculation became rampant; people everywhere were living beyond their true means, were buying goods they did not need, paying any prices asked. Wastefulness and extravagance became the order of the day.

While this wild orgy of speculating and spending was going on, we were squeezing Europe to pay the war debts, washing our hands of all orderly efforts to make the League of Nations strong and effective, and smugly criticizing and suspecting every effort made by Europe to get honestly on her feet. True, we were loaning billions of our surplus capital abroad; we were lending our aid to adjust the reparation quarrel. But these were acts neither of generosity nor good-will; they were measures taken to establish stability and keep our debtors solvent; we wanted their markets, of course; but always, we kept a fish-eye on those inter-Allied debts, and to stop their payment by means of exports (the only way they ever can be paid), we finally jacked up our tariff to heights unheard of. And during these lurid years our business leaders, our politicians, our economic doctors and most of our orators, pulpit and other, were glorifying the great advance of American civilization, the lordly benefactions of our multimillionaires, the vast strides in quantity production and the absolutely unlimited purchasing and consuming power of our people.

In the meanwhile we were "capitalizing" all of these wonderful things; corporations were issuing shares to the public by the billions; an endless chain was established, whereby the great, deluded American public, making fortunes almost overnight through the gyrations of the stock markets, were spending these fortunes as fast or faster than they were made (on paper), and thus ever expanding that consumer demand, which continued to increase corporation profits and justify the creation of more and more securities; which, in turn, were handed to the public as ever-recurring bargains.

Those who sow the wind reap the whirlwind, just as they did in earlier days. And how could it be otherwise? In a generation of men who have been taught from boyhood that there is no meaning to life except what we can see and feel; that ideals are old-fashioned; that any sort of religion except the humanistic variety is only for old ladies and nincompoops; that heaven is on earth only and is measured primarily by one's bank account; that looking out for number one is the only gospel—in such a day and age what can one expect except just what has happened?

If the economic world is on its back, it is primarily because of the materialistic philosophy of modern America. The mad race for wealth brought on the overproduction, the overexpanding of plants, the ever-expanding output, the inflation of capital, and the crash. If the silk industry has flattened Japan, it is because of the enormous overproduction of rayon; if coffee and rubber are wrecking Brazil, it is because they

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have been produced enormously beyond the world's consuming capacity, for quick profit and big dividends; the same thing applies to sugar in the Caribbean countries, to copper, to cotton, to steel and iron, to automobiles, in our own. It was thought that supply would never overtake demand in a country where the popular god was Henry Ford. And if Europe is still in the doldrums, it is primarily because we long ago left her on the rocks.

Such is the pass that the modern temper has brought us to. It surely is the age of modernism in business, as it is in philosophy, in religion, in the liberalization of the individual.

Now as to the remedies. How many men of prominence in business or political circles have emphasized the need of going to the root of things; of going back to the homely virtues in our way of living, or in the training of the new generation? Are we becoming dissatisfied with the revolt of youth, or do we still think, with Ben Lindsey, that it is an evidence of progress? Are we alarmed, as a people, at the tendency to destroy the home by the weakening of the bonds of marriage, or do we think that also an evidence of progress? Are we determined to take measures to eliminate the recurrence of such a wild orgy of speculative and gambling prosperity as we have recently witnessed; or are we only preoccupied with restoring that condition of things as soon as we possibly can? It is true, no doubt, that through world trade agreements, the curtailment of production, and a general restoration of confidence, we can pass out of this depression into the broad daylight of a new prosperity. If we do this only we shall, perhaps, have solved the problem of the hour; but in future years will the world follow a course of sanitty and not again run into the state that existed a year or two ago?

I have no notion that the average business leader in America looks beyond the immediate needs of the situation. These needs are sound enough, but it is as sure as night follows day that until the modern temper changes, until our western world begins to pass out of its present condition of paganism—preoccupying itself so exclusively with things of matter rather than things of the spirit, and bringing up its children with such ideas—there will be no permanent cure. Another period of ebullient prosperity, half a dozen years hence, may, barring accidents, come upon us again, and if so, the disaster which will follow may be far worse than the present.

What our Western world needs, more today than ever before, and must have if our civilization is to endure, is a return to the verities, a raising up of the old ideals and standards of life which are today widely laughed at as the whimsicalities of our forefathers.

A SHRINE OF ALICE MEYNELL: I

By KATHARINE TYNAN

A GREAT many Americans will know Greatham, by Pulborough, in leafy Sussex, where Alice Meynell spent the last years of her beautiful life. I think she was always a country woman at heart, but she was a townswoman when I first knew her, and during many years in which our friendship grew deeper and sweeter. One of her most shining and lovely virtues was being able to give up without anyone but herself and God being aware of it. There is a little poem of hers in which I find that abnegation. When I think of it I see her always with a bowed head.

Via Veritas Vita

You never attained to Him,
If to attain
Be to abide than that may be,
Heavy the way followed with so much pain,
The way was He.

She had supremely the secret of setting aside, of giving up. Perhaps even in a London house she carried with her her own atmosphere. I knew her in three London houses, one temporary. There was something in all of those houses, it might have been her own beautiful presence, which suggested country—and Italian country. She was so austere, yet so humbly and simply human. Her head set against a windowpane might almost have a suggestion of an Italian picture. She was a happy wife and the mother of many children yet, so to speak, she carried her nun's cell with her.

For many years she lived and worked in London at 21 Upper Phillimore Place, where I first saw her, at 47 Palace Court, where I lived under the same roof with her for many months at a time, temporarily in Linden Gardens, where I also spent a great part of the summer with her. My memory of all these places is not of London at all. It is something radiant, and of Italy, or it might be of some old German or Austrian town.

I am sure that in all those years she never expressed a wish to live in the country, but when she visited the country her rapture was evident. What had she to do with streets and shops and noisy traffic and hustling crowds, this ethereal creature! When in 1911 we heard the amazing intelligence that the Meynells proposed to be country people we could hardly believe it. Wilfred, especially, seemed to belong to the urban town and Alice would never have chosen for herself, but the most assiduous and tender of husbands must have known her heart's desire when he spent a fortunate legacy in buying up a hundred acres or so of wood and moorland in Sussex. Wilfred Meynell is a born

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builder; a town planner, an architect, were lost in him. He is in more senses than one a builder. He is one to gather about him those needing to be protected, to fend for them, to give them a cover for their heads.

I have sometimes thought that there must have been a happy security in a special way for Alice Meynell in that marriage. She was so delicate a creature that she needed care and protection. I imagine she did not have them in her childhood and youth, with a most beloved and gifted mother who was entirely without the wordly qualities, who fed on beauty though the cupboard might be bare. I have heard rumors of Mrs. Thompson in a passionate pursuit of beauty somewhere in Italy or elsewhere, arriving with her two little girls at some place where there was neither bed nor board for them. Alice Meynell must have felt in later life that sense of security, of having a man who would always fend for her and hers, as she might not have felt it if she had grown up in the safe shelter of an English Victorian home.

I think Wilfred Meynell knew of that secret longing of hers, even though it went unexpressed when he made that purchase of precious, unprofitable things. He must have had something to give up for himself in leaving London life, where he had so many friends whom he received hospitably under his roof, where he went to and fro with a brisk cheerfulness, hearing the news and telling it, always immensely busy. He had been much of a journalist and had sacrificed for that something of an assured literary reputation. It was part of his fending, the holy war for the precious wife and children. I remember him as always busy, with small things and big, doing paragraphs for the *Daily Chronicle* or doing articles for a review, editing papers and magazines, now and again turning out some delightful book of verse or prose. I always think of him as among the wittiest men I have ever known. Perhaps doing so many things, he failed to take his rightful place as a wit, as a writer to be considered and remembered.

He too had the virtue of self-abnegation. He put himself aside for others, standing in the shadow of his wife's name or Francis Thompson's. When he saved Francis Thompson for the world he did a very great thing. I doubt if anyone else would have continued in patience, in love, in courage with the poor poet who was forever backsliding. He would have worried, worn out other people. Wilfred Meynell saw in him always the divine fire, without him there would have been in all probability no Francis Thompson. Alice Meynell wrote of her father: "The things he abstained from would have enriched others." I believe that Wilfred Meynell made something of the same sacrifice. He chose to be in his wife's shadow where she would never have placed him.

He had the eye of the born builder and maker. He had built the Palace Court House to the plans of the famous architect, Leonard Stokes. They gave up Palace Court as a residence some time about 1912, but they had still a London habitation in Granville Place, a very charming flat which had been made out of discarded storerooms of Messrs. Burns and Oates, who occupied the ground floor. I remember being taken to see these storerooms, or perhaps I only saw them through Alice's eyes for I believe I was not in London during those years. Perhaps the flat came earlier, before the acquisition of Greatham which may have hastened or inspired it. I certainly see those storerooms, heaped with all manner of cases, but it was surely through Alice's eyes. She said to me, or she wrote to me: "Wilfred says we can make a home of it, but I cannot see it."

They did make a home of it. There was a long drawing-room full of strange beauty and sweetness which must have been because of her presence. There were American and other guests to be found there making her circle. The flat lacked nothing of convenience, even of spaciousness. Perhaps she would have made any place she lived in spacious. The old beloved things from Palace Court were there. The paneling of gold Japanese embroidery, the books, the pictures of friends, the thousand and one mementoes of foreign travel. There was something unique about that flat. It had the one defect of Wilfred's building —the place where wardrobes should be was occupied by books and pictures, but otherwise it had all one could desire, and there was a wardrobe for Alice. Alice's wardrobe was planned elaborately by a friend who was an amateur carpenter. I inspected that wardrobe in silence; it had a place for everything and no room at all for anything, and being made to the amateur male carpenter's plan, it had cost as much as six good roomy old wardrobes bought second-hand. No woman would have planned such a wardrobe. Wilfred must have held aloof from wardrobes, or there his making failed him.

If there was an interregnum between Palace Court and Greatham—and I think there may have been—perhaps after all I may have seen those storerooms. I can imagine what it meant when Alice Meynell's amazed eyes looked on Greatham for the first time, set amid acres of deep bracken and lovely woodlands. It was a wastefulness of beauty that was well worth having. Wilfred had seen the whole place with the maker's eye—leaving out wardrobes. There was a beautiful old brown farmhouse, of a true Sussex peace. I cannot imagine where the farming was done, but perhaps the little estate had not gone back at that time to being nature's own. Anyhow the farmhouse was beautiful and there was a little group of out-buildings. Wilfred Meynell had had the art to make something beautiful and almost spacious of the storerooms above Messrs. Burns and Oates. He saw possibilities no one else could see in the farmhouse and its low outbuildings, not only actually but spiritually as well. His children had married by this time and there were grandchildren. One was widowed by the war, later, but even then there was perhaps only one of his

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children set above his protection and she not beyond his love. He saw himself and Alice growing old surrounded by their children. A golden dream to think of in the world we have come to, where the children are hardly grown before we must toss them out to an unkindly world. He set to work, first to make of the farmhouse a home for himself and Alice, keeping intact the beautiful old brown front. At the back he built a spacious room to be the common sitting-room for themselves and their guests. He put in bath rooms, and all else which a dwelling-house could need.

Next he made of a cattle-shed a house for his then one unmarried daughter. The once cow-shed, which is now a beautiful long room with a beamed roof, is the home where Viola Meynell writes and works. There is a tiled courtyard with one or two small buildings on which looks another house where the widowed daughter now lives with her children. Monica, the eldest daughter—the beloved sprite of the old days of Palace Court—died last year. It was once her house. Beyond the little settlement of the houses there is a bungalow—but I must deal first with my memories of Alice as I saw her in this happy home she had come to.

She always made a picture, and I can see her now silhouetted against the great brick fireplace or one of the low windows, or on the wide grassy space in front of the house, standing very still and looking up. She had a way of looking up as though she followed a bird's flight. I was not very much in England in those years when my home was in Ireland. The war intervening, I did not revisit England between my leaving it in 1911 and the end of the war except for a brief passing through. I do not think I saw Alice in all those years. She had found peace at Greatham, but the lovely peace was broken into by the coming of the war which filled her with grief and with great consternation.

She never for a single moment in all those four years came to tolerate the war. It was always an abiding nightmare with her. She was never one to take things easily except her own giving up. In the years that have followed the war with all their breaking of laws, their loosening of moral sanctions, their contempt for plain duty and honesty, one may feel grateful for this single and uncompromising soul, set high above it all. Her heart was broken for the war, but happily she did not live to see its fruits. It came to her door in the death and sufferings of relatives and friends. Not even Greatham could shut out the war. I did not see her again, I think, till 1919 when I saw Greatham for the first time. It was not then nearly as beautiful as it became later. The war had hindered the making, but it was beautiful in that green solitude under the Sussex downs.

The war, over which she had grieved endlessly, had weakened her hold on life. Her heart was affected and her hold on life slackened. She had always been content to have great lapses into silence. She was more content than ever now. There never were eyes beyond which musing went on so endlessly. She never lowered her eyes, they were always uplifted and they never were without their element of pain and patience. The pain had deepened, but perhaps in a way it was rather a memory of pain. One wondered what went on behind those eyes. I remember when I knew her first as a girl coming from a very conservative Ireland, I was half-surprised, half-delighted by her habit of cigarette-smoking. Cigarette-smoking by women had not begun in Ireland in those times, and I had not up to that left Ireland. The strange thing was that the smoke of a cigarette floating about her head gave her the last touch of dreamy charm.

But it was not mere tobacco smoke that floated about her head, it was mists, clouds, dreams, shadows. She was always wonderful; she looked her poetry as no other woman poet I have known looked hers, and with the smoke about her head she was a seer of visions remote, isolated. One went to the poets to express what one felt about her:

> Blank misgivings of a creature
> Moving about in worlds not realized,
> Or her soul was like a star and dwelt apart.

All the time her humanity was there. She was again:

> Careful for a whole world of sin and pain.

But she had a childlike gaiety at times. There was always a surprise in her laughter and I think the sense of the jest came to her as a surprise. The uncertainty was the charm.

Sometimes she was too far away to catch at the nimble jest, and one had a blank sense of disappointment. She was at her loveliest when she jested with a child. I have seen her go through lunch with her whole attention fixed on a godson of three years old. They had the most wonderful jests and her laughter pealed incessantly. At such times she was a child herself and forgot to be sad.

The Eternal Wonder

Where did the splendid songs of romance go,
Taking her gay laugh with them, and her hand,
And her kisses, which I had come to know,
Her eyes, which I had come to understand.
Only an hour has gone, and the bright earth
Is deserted; the pinks and lilacs dead,
The larks flown—and the rose so proud in birth
Rears up no longer its glorious head . . .

An hour ago—no more!—we were seeking
The small valley flowers, running swiftly down
Hills riotous with color, and speaking
Dear and ancient words on the road to town,
Speaking brave dreams in the cool evening's glow
And vows for the first star—an hour ago!

BERT COOKSLEY.

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GENEVA ONCE AGAIN

By GEORGE N. SHUSTER

IN MUNICH bands are (as I write) playing Christmas music in the streets. A forest of evergreen tinged with snow flurries invites purchasers along the street which a fastidious king once built after the manner of Florence. Most significant of all, however, is the array of food kitchens and gift parcels which women have marshaled in order to bring some little joy into numberless poor homes—women in whom the spirit of Christ expresses itself against the ancient background of the happiness of Christendom. It is possibly this momentary nearness to the central sweetness of history which sets the problematical character of existing conditions in such sharp relief. For twelve years the world has subsisted on the political and economic idealism bequeathed to it by the peace of Versailles. Today everybody is wondering if the principal achievement of that idealism—the League of Nations—will really suffice to reduce the friction which in many parts of Europe threatens to engender flame. Nor is it merely a question of the diplomatic efficiency of Geneva. How shall one estimate the dependability of the ideas upon which the League has relied and of the motives to which it can appeal? Can liberalism still look forward to something like a future?

The catastrophic effects of the disarmament comedy cannot be overestimated. Precisely at the moment when industrial depression was weighing most heavily upon the less fortunate countries, when unemployment was dooming hundreds of thousands to inactivity, the nations which just now control Europe decided not to give up a single gun or a single soldier. Thus a new generation which knows nothing of the Somme or the Argonne was virtually informed by the highest political authority on the Continent that the future would be decided by arms. What reasons underlay this decision matter little. It was a debate between confidence in pacific weapons and confidence in war, and the verdict went to war. And the result? I propose to answer by setting forth as well as I can just one moment in the exceedingly complicated drama of today.

On January 19 the League of Nations will meet to discuss the treatment allotted to the German minority in Poland. Three formal notes of protest, each heavily documented, have been handed to the League Council by the German government. With the outrages thus catalogued we shall not concern ourselves here, excepting to note that it is difficult to form an impression of the extremes to which this "terror" has gone. The portions of Upper Silesia which were ceded to Poland after the war are industrial districts in which one town joins hands with another. It is safe to say that during weeks every single one of these towns was patrolled by frenzied bands which sought to crush by force all vestiges of German feeling. In general the terrorists have been members of secret patriotic organizations between which and the Pilsudski government there exist discernible ties. But when one asks precisely why such a flood of violence was loosed at this time, one is face to face with a certain amount of mystery. It is clear that the Pilsudski régime had for one reason or another resolved to crush all opposition. The several minorities —German, Ukrainian, Russian, Jewish—were manhandled, but the Polish leaders not in sympathy with the present government were also hunted down, brutally mistreated and imprisoned. Theories as to precisely what the doughty old marshal really wanted have the spice of variety. So far nothing has issued from the mêlée excepting a military cabinet, a Sejm utterly subservient to the wishes of the dictator, and an added measure of suspense and unrest.

As a whole the Poland of today is an extraordinary apparition which a visit as short as mine cannot suffice to divine. There is, however, no harm in risking the assertion that the Poles are one of the most remarkable of all peoples, equipped with one of the most astoundingly bad of all governments. Nowhere else on earth probably is poverty so holy, so Franciscan, as in Poland. The masses are conglomerations of simple and selfless souls which dedicate themselves to ideals with abandon, which ask little for themselves and which retain a breathlessly beautiful faith in Providence. Not as passive as the Russian, the Pole is also far less given to personal aggrandizement than is the European. I shall say no more than that the poor woman who sells you a paper in Cracow gives you a benediction with the day's news. But this people has a government! A government based first of all upon the art of engendering hurrahs. Division after division of soldiers march past upon every conceivable occasion with flags and bands. Every new state building is lavishly bedecked with marble and bellicose pictures, in veritably Napoleonic style. A deluge of chauvinistic propaganda, distributed by a multitude of organizations and agencies, is designed to concentrate attention upon nationalistic aims rather than upon internal desires or reforms. The Church—one says this advisedly—is more or less abjectly subservient to the state, so that even prelates amble along docilely in the cortège of the dictator. Freemasonry, concubinage and personal dishonesty characterize the ruling class, which does not even manifest an interest in social amelioration. In short: allowing of course for a difference in cultural *niveau,* it is possible to draw an interesting parallel between contemporary Poland and Mexico.

Between this Polish government and Germany there has existed a state of grim if silent warfare during twelve years, the progress of which has, understandably enough, not been followed by public opinion. That

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the struggle should now have come to a head in Upper Silesia is not a coincidence. Owing to the fact that the territory here involved was part of a complex industrial unit through which the new boundary lines cut with a kind of arbitrary carelessness—and likewise to the circumstance that a good three-fourths of the population was avowedly German—a series of special rulings was drawn up and put into force. The most important of these is the Treaty of 1922, according to which the welfare of the "minority"—i.e., the German residents in the district deeded over to Poland—was entrusted to a mixed commission the president of which, M. Calonder, is a Swiss citizen. In the last analysis, decisions reached by this commission must be enforced by the League of Nations. But though the list of grievances forwarded to Geneva during the past decade is ominously long, it was not possible until recently to induce the Council to take a stand. One cause of this inactivity was of course the fact that Stresemann, interested in freeing the Rhenish provinces, could not afford to press the eastern boundary question; but the primary result was that German confidence in Geneva was undermined in all circles where relations with Poland were of paramount importance.

Since there can be no question of the legitimacy of the Geneva grievances, events have played strongly into the Hitler hand. During the recent session of the Reichstag, it became quite evident that the National-Socialistic leaders planned to derive capital out of the eastern question. They placed increasingly less stress on their relatively fantastic economic program and more on Upper Silesia and the Corridor. This is of course likewise the trump card in the Hugenberg pack, so that a fusion of all German conservatives in support of energetic action against Poland may be expected. To date the Center party has opposed the adoption of all extreme measures in a spirit of fidelity to its traditional policy of conciliation with Poland. Several addresses by one of its most distinguished spokesmen, Monsignor Ulitzka, are interesting proofs of German Catholic aversion to violent measures. It must be conceded, however, that the Center will henceforth have to bank very strongly on assistance from the League of Nations. If developments in the near future do not show that the treaties guaranteeing minority rights mean what they say, it will become exceedingly difficult for the German government to continue not merely amicable relations with Poland but also its present coöperation with the League.

Accordingly, the coming weeks at Geneva will be observed with the deepest interest. One of the chief desires of the Hitler group is to find some acceptable reason for resurrecting compulsory military service in Germany. The strength of the party lies first in its nucleus of former officers, for the most part now unemployed, and second in a throng of youngsters who can find no work and so would welcome an opportunity to learn military drill. Unless something of decisive significance issues from the pending discussions, it will be virtually impossible to halt a marked shift to the Right throughout the Reich. Here the spectacular demonstrations which attended a showing of "All Quiet on the Western Front" are straws revealing the whims of the wind. That this film was anti-German was never seriously contended. The real target was the pacifistic character of Remarque's book, which the cinema production emphasized. One supposes that in view of the earnestness of the situation, the League will endeavor to find some kind of compromise. Whether this will suffice to calm the waters is exceedingly doubtful. The Geneva of today simply does not possess the moral strength needed to cure the ills which underlie contemporary civilization.

One cannot help noticing that existing relations between Germany and Poland render the last-named country anything but a barrier between Europe and Bolshevism. Pilsudski's ruthlessness has made Russia and the Reich potential allies in a campaign against the Polish legions which may not be so far off as many believe. This does not at all necessarily mean the radicalization of Germany in the sense of Moscow. Indeed such a struggle might even bring about a great change in the Soviet scheme. What cannot be doubted, however, is that the situation as given involves a perilous weakening of Christendom. The failure of the West, in greater or lesser degree the inheritor of Catholic tradition, to agree upon a status quo politically, socially and ethnically plays directly into the hands of radical revolution. It may already be true, for instance (and men in positions of Catholic authority with whom I have discussed the matter think it is true), that Polish treatment of the Ukrainian minority has dynamited the most important bridge between the Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodoxy. Likewise it is one of the ironies of history that Upper Silesia, perhaps the most largely Catholic of all the German provinces, should have become the scene of a bitter and sanguinary conflict in which religion has been made a weapon of battle. To date the purely spiritual results are alarmingly bad.

I think that such problems as this are primarily grave warnings that the dose of liberalism poured out of the bottle of the nineteenth century and labeled "internationalism" will not suffice to effect the rehabilitation of the West. The fact of the matter is that Europe is veering toward a moment of decision—a moment when a tremendous "either—or," such as was asked during the period of the Moslem invasions, will call for a positive answer. Then the era of compromise will end abruptly and the world will resound with the clash between absolutes. For the moment, however, we shall see what Geneva can do. Geneva, where Wilson is remembered and where Briand, Stresemann and Chamberlain have spoken. Geneva which does not believe in absolutes. Geneva to which nobody has ever gone on his knees. But nevertheless Geneva which might still be a great deal if the world wished.

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A FORTNIGHT AT CAMBRIDGE

By EDWARD P. KEENAN

MY PIPE is a black and stumpy object, unlovely to the eye and to the nose. Yet I cherish it as the friend who shared with me an intellectual adventure in the ancient and honorable University of Cambridge. I had planned, last year, to content myself with seeing England's literary landmarks tourist fashion, beginning at Oxford, proceeding to Stratford, and ending in London, with Westminster Abbey and the Cheshire Cheese. Shortly before sailing, I received from the Cambridge Board of Extra-Mural Studies a discreet bulletin announcing the inauguration of a summer session of lectures on Shakespeare and the English novel, "specially suited to the needs of students from English-speaking countries overseas." Mindful of Lord Essex's advice "rather to go a hundred miles to speak with one wise man than five miles to see a fair town," I eagerly seized this opportunity of sharing with ripe scholars the stores of their knowledge of English letters. In company with a hundred other American students I arrived in Cambridge the afternoon of July 23, the opening day of the session.

I had bespoken a room in St. Edmund's House, a residence for priests studying in the university. An antiquated taxi jolted me past the colleges flanking Trumpington Street, and came to a convulsive stop before a stately brick house mantled with ivy. The Master of St. Edmund's, a genial and scholarly priest, greeted me cordially and conducted me to what he called my "diggings," a large room looking out upon a garden in midsummer bloom. Open bookshelves of dark oak lined the walls, and a jolly little fireplace in one corner made me hope bad weather would give me an excuse to enjoy the luxury of a wood fire. A large study table was placed between the two windows, and a capacious easy chair, set near the fireplace, invited one to sink into its depths and read by the hour. The Master interrupted my survey of the study.

"Do you smoke?" he asked.

I was forced to blush a negative.

"Buy yourself a pipe and start tonight. The only way to read is with a pipe in your mouth, and your head in clouds of smoke. Now, if you have nothing particular to do, I'll show you a bit of Cambridge."

As we turned from Queen's Road down an avenue shaded by lofty elms, my companion initiated me into Cambridge lore. I learned that what Oxford knew as a quad, Cambridge called a court; that the proper pronunciation of Caius was Keys; and that May Week really occured in June. In the midst of an exciting description of a recent cricket match, he suddenly cried, "Ecce!" And turning I saw spread before me the Backs of Cambridge.

It was now late afternoon, and the sun cast long shadows on the closely shaven lawns of delicate green, sloping gently down from the college walls to the banks of the river Cam. A small boat appeared from beneath the Old Bridge near the plum-colored walls of St. John's College, and glided slowly past Trinity College Library, designed by Sir Christopher Wren. I watched it as it continued underneath Clare Bridge, and disappeared from view near the spot where the spires of King's College Chapel tower majestically above the white walls of Clare College. I came, I saw, and I was conquered by the quiet charm of the river, college, and sward whose beauty has made the Backs of Cambridge one of the showplaces of England.

"You have seen Cambridge as I would like you to remember it," said the Master quietly. "Now explore the colleges for yourself. And here is a bit of advice. When a door is unlocked, open it and walk in. Cambridge does not flaunt her beauties, neither does she hide them."

I spent the rest of the afternoon wandering about the narrow streets and peering into college courts. Coming upon a tobacco shop, I purchased a pipe and a package of what the clerk assured me was "an exceptionally mild smoking mixture." When I returned to St. Edmund's for dinner, I met the other priests staying there during the long vacation. These included several English fathers, a Hungarian Benedictine engaged in research work in physics, two young Irish priests pursuing special studies in English, and an American Jesuit just arrived to begin the three-year course in Latin and Greek. Dinner was a lively affair, the talk ranging from a recent tennis match to an animated discussion of a mooted point of theology. When we adjourned to the den for coffee, one of the English priests attacked the piano, and soon the room was ringing with the "March of the Peers" from "Iolanthe." The conversation and music were so delightful that I found it hard to tear myself away to attend the first meeting of the summer session held that night in the Arts School on Bene't Street.

As I walked slowly home from the lecture, I resolved while in Cambridge to study English literature, not in books but in places; to walk where Milton once paced, to stand where Erasmus taught, to see Spenser's room, and seek out Marlowe's favorite haunts. Then back in my room I performed a solemn rite. I strengthened my wavering resolution by recalling to mind the names of great pipe smokers of antiquity, and carefully filled the bowl of the pipe with long shreds of tobacco. Then I applied a match, and valiantly puffed. The acquisition of all knowledge is painful, and learning to smoke English tobacco proved no exception. However I have lived to commemorate Cambridge in many a fragrant pipeful.

Next morning the lectures proper began. The morn-

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ings of the summer session were devoted to two ninety-minute lectures, separated by a fifteen-minute intermission. The course on Shakespeare was given by T. R. Henn, a fellow of St. Catherine's College. Mr. Henn was a brilliant and scholarly young man, greatly absorbed in his subject. Every sentence of his lecture on different plays of Shakespeare was loaded with ore. He loved to dwell on the minutiae of quarto and folio readings, and to contrast the tragedies of his two literary gods, Shakespeare and Euripides. From his course I learned the importance of Aristotle's "Poetics" as a standard of literary criticism.

The lectures on the English novelists given by Percy L. Babington of St. John's College were a sheer delight. Mr. Babington gazed on us the morning of his first lecture, with a cold eye and wearied imperturbability. "Cheese," he announced in a harsh rasping voice, "is fit to be eaten only when it is positively scampering." Then he proceeded with his discourse on Richardson. He delighted to give dramatic readings of selections from the authors under consideration. When he ended his lecture on Dickens à la Mrs. Gamp—"Of course I could tell you much more if I was so disposed; but I am not"—the class paid him the tribute of spontaneous applause, which pleased him immensely. From both series of lectures I acquired a new respect and love for that body of literature known as English letters.

One spot in Cambridge I never tired of visting was the Hall of Magdalene, the college of that inimitable gossip, Samuel Pepys. I would mount the staircase in the rear of the Hall, and gaze down on the high table where the fellows ate in all their glory, and on the long rows of oaken tables and benches where the undergraduates sat. I used to reflect on the wisdom of the Cambridge authorities who enjoined that the students take a certain number of meals in common. The gay, wise and witty talk, the clash of opinion and flash of thought which is part of the conversation at every meeting of students, is regarded as one of the most important elements in the education of a member of a college.

From Magdalene it was only a short walk to Trinity College Library, where I spent many happy hours pouring over the manuscript of "Henry Esmond" written in Thackeray's exquisitely neat hand, and the first sketch of "Paradise Lost," in Milton's handwriting. This rough draft shows that Milton first intended to treat his theme dramatically. In the library is Thorwaldsen's statue of Byron, twice refused by the deans of Westminster Abbey. It was but a step from Trinity to King's College Chapel. I used to go there every day, admiring the fan vaulting roof, the superb beauty of the organ screen, and the majestic windows, which perhaps inspired Milton to pen the lines:

> Storied windows rightly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light.

On the last day of the summer session I received from G. F. Hickson, secretary to the Board of Extra-Mural Studies, a certificate of attendance testifying that I had "been in regular and satisfactory attendance at the courses . . . each of which amounted to fifteen hours of systematic instruction by means of lectures and class discussions." Then I returned to St. Edmund's to take leave of the Master and the priests who had so kindly welcomed me, and made me one of them during my stay at the house. Dispatching my valise to the station, I lit my pipe and went for a last look at college, river and inn. As I walked up Trumpington Street, I reviewed my fortnight in Cambridge. I remembered the conversations at St. Edmund's, which Dr. Johnson would have pronounced "good talk." I thought of the intellectual stimulus received in the lectures given by finished scholars. And as the moment of departure grew near, I realized how dear to me had grown the quiet university city. Turning into Queen's College, I crossed the bridge and took a last look at the Backs. The grey colleges stretched out as far as the eye could see, and the Cam was shaded by overhanging elms. As I gazed at the colleges, rich in tradition and gracious in age, these lines of Wordsworth came to me:

> I could not print
> Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps
> Of generations of illustrious men
> Unmoved. I could not always lightly pass
> Through the same gateways, sleep where they had slept,
> Wake where they waked, range that inclosure old,
> That garden of great intellects, undisturbed.
> Place also by the side of this dark sense
> Of noble feeling, that those spiritual men,
> Even the great Newton's own ethereal self,
> Seemed humbled in these precincts.

They seemed best to express what every lover of Cambridge has felt.

Slab

A man with tired eyes,
Strangely lonely,
May measure time
By light-years only.

By sea-birds dried
On a silver moon,
Another may reckon
Late or soon.

But I, pulled groundward,
Perhaps less wise,
Measures the ages
Not by skies,

But by this
And this alone—
Bird-wings caught
In long-cooled stone!

FRANCES M. FROST.

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CANADA FACES HER PROBLEMS

By M. GRATTAN O'LEARY

CANADA, like the United States, is beset by political unrest and economic depression. Mr. Hoover may be bowed down by the problem of prohibition, the plight of Northwestern farmers and the insurgency of Congress, but it is doubtful whether his position is more uneasy than that of Premier Bennett, back from the London Imperial-Economic Conference empty-handed, confronted by farmers who want a fixed price for wheat, by nation-wide unemployment, by the threat of an enormous budget deficit. Not since the post-war depression which produced an agrarian uprising in the West and brought new orientations in party politics, has the dominion experienced such vicissitudes.

The London Economic Conference was looked to hopefully to rescue the Canadian farmer from his troubles. It was, in the light of British and world economic conditions, a too optimistic hope. It failed to take accurate account of the world's overproduction of wheat, and failed also, and much more seriously, in comprehension of the freetrade doctrines of the British people. For a quarter of a century Canada has been endeavoring to secure preferential treatment in the markets of the mother country. It was this hope that foundationed the British preferences given by Sir Wilfrid Laurier as far back as 1897. It was the dominating factor in Canada's refusal of Mr. Taft's 1911 offer of reciprocity with the United States. And it was the governing motive in the increased British preferences granted by Mr. King's Liberal Ministry in the budget of 1929. Throughout all of this period the underlying aim of Canadian fiscal policy was that the dominion should become less and less dependent upon the markets of the United States, should promote increasing barter with Great Britain and the British dominions. It was an attitude easily intelligible. Over more than half a century the trade relations of Canadians with the United States had been anything but satisfactory. Time and again Canadian trade pilgrimages to Washington seeking tariff concessions were met almost with contempt, and the memory of this, made more vivid by such recent enactments as the Fordney-McCumber tariff and the Hawley-Smoot schedules, which all but shut the Canadian farmer from the American market, strengthened the determination of the dominion to look more and more to the empire as a market for their products.

Practically one-fourth of all the exports of the United States are taken by Canada. But while 10,000,000 Canadians were buying nearly $900,000,000 worth of United States products annually, Washington showed increasing disposition to limit the purchase of goods from Canadian farms and factories. The hostility engendered by this became more manifest every year, and it reached its climax last July when Mr. Bennett and the Conservative party were put into office with a mandate to impose the highest possible tariff against the United States and to seek an outlet for Canadian goods in the empire and the mother country.

Mr. Bennett's present difficulty, politically at any rate, is that while he proceeded to carry out his mandate so far as the United States was concerned, increasing duties against American products to as high, in some cases, as 100 percent, he also heightened duties against the products of Great Britain. A political imperialist, but an economic nationalist, his policy, translated into legislative enactments at a special session of Parliament was "Canada First," the safeguarding of Canadian industry from all external competition, including the competition of the empire. And while the duties he imposed upon British goods were not as severe as those levied upon American and foreign products, they ranged from 10 to 25 percent, and undoubtedly struck a blow against British exports to the dominion.

Mr. Bennett's course lacked the approval of even his warmest supporters. The Canadian people are traditionally protectionist, but a large ingredient of their protectionism is a fear of economic penetration by the United States. The background of this is the old United Empire loyalist sentiment, overwhelmingly predominant in Ontario and a potent political factor in the provinces by the Atlantic. Thus, while there existed a strong sentiment favorable to tariff retaliation against Washington, not much enthusiasm prevailed for steps that might lessen trade with the mother country. Added to this, and complicating matters for Mr. Bennett, the Western farmer, looking hopefully to the London Economic Conference for a solution of his difficulties, hardly regarded a blow at British trade as creating the right atmosphere for action.

And the plight of the Canadian farmer was a desperate one. His difficulty, which still remains, was his inability to find profitable markets for his large surplus of wheat. This trouble, which is the source of most, if not all, of the existing economic depression, goes back to 1928, when there was a large wheat crop of excellent quality. The Western Wheat Pool, invincibly confident in its collectivist theories, believed that rationed marketing would bring higher prices, fed wheat slowly to the world markets, and closed the crop year with a large carry-over. The same policy was pursued in 1929, the result being that in August of this year (1930) the West found itself with a carry-over of 200,000,000 bushels. This in itself, considering world overproduction, would have imposed a difficult problem, but when the new crop added 300,000,000 bushels more to the surplus, the price of wheat meanwhile

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dropping to $.60 a bushel, the economic repercussions were bound to be severe. One of the immediate effects was a $500,000,000 reduction in the purchasing power of the nation, followed by acute distress and political turmoil in the three prairie provinces.

The other provinces, including Ontario and Quebec, suffer almost correspondingly. The prairie provinces, grain producers, consume about $200,000,000 of manufactured products annually. With this purchasing power cut off, with Eastern manufacturers deprived of much of their home market, the unemployment problem, which would have been serious in any event, was rendered more acute.

It was, therefore, a hard blow to Canadian hopes when the London Conference failed to offer even a ray of promise for the Western farmer. Mr. Bennett departing for Britain, expressed confidence in his mission, and up to the very end, when the failure of the conference became clear to all, faith existed that somehow he would induce the British government to purchase the bulk of the dominion's wheat surplus. Mr. Bennett, within the restricted ground of his "Canada First" policy, undoubtedly did his best. His offer to the British people of a preference in Canadian markets, based upon a 10 percent increase in the duties upon all foreign products, was sincere. The weakness of the plan, so far as the British people were concerned, was that while it involved a guarantee that the British would buy Canada's wheat, there was no corresponding guarantee that the Canadian people would buy British goods. On the contrary, the actual position was that, taking account of the tariff increases imposed by the special session of the Canadian Parliament the barriers against British goods were higher than before.

In the circumstances, Canadian opinion did not greatly blame Britain for rejecting the Bennett plan. The conference might have ended amicably, and with possibility for achievement when it resumes next year at Ottawa, had it not been for an unfortunate phrase used by Mr. J. H. Thomas, a leading member of the MacDonald Ministry. In a debate in the British Commons, Mr. Thomas, under attack, and caught off his guard, characterized Mr. Bennett's plan as "humbug." It was one of those unfortunate lapses which often influence politics more than men or measures, and it produced a storm of criticism and recrimination between the two countries. The chief effect of the conference, indeed, so far as Canada was concerned, was that Mr. Bennett, who went to England with a high ambition for imperial economic unity based upon tariffs, left London with a veiled threat of economic separatism.

Nor was this the end. Mr. G. Howard Ferguson, Premier of Ontario, recently appointed Canadian High Commissioner to London, committed the extraordinary indiscretion of making a vigorous attack upon the Socialist policies of the Labor government to which he has been accredited. This, not unnaturally has added to the strained relations between Ottawa and Downing Street, has made coöperation between the two governments difficult, if not impossible. Mr. Philip Snowden, the acid-tongued Socialist Chancellor of the Exchequer, has a good memory.

So Mr. Bennett has returned to a Canada which has still some 250,000,000 bushels of unsold wheat, which has an acute unemployment problem, and whose declining revenues threaten an enormous deficit at the close of the fiscal year. The weakness of his position is that, like Mr. Hoover in the United States, he took office on a platform of prosperity. Mr. Bennett, electioneering, told the Canadian people that failure to market the Western wheat crop and prevalence of unemployment were the fruits of the Liberal Ministry of Mr. King. After four months in office, and despite millions voted for unemployment relief, unemployment is still acute, and the wheat of the West remains unsold.

But Mr. Bennett, like Mr. Britling, will see it through. Possessed of unbounded faith in protection as an economic remedy, he will apply it in increasing measure at the coming session of Parliament. If there be those in the United States who believe that failure of the Economic Conference will induce Mr. Bennett's government to turn once more to the United States, they are fated for disillusionment. Precisely what further steps he will take remains to be seen, but that duties will be heightened upon American products is as certain as anything can be in politics. The truth is that this policy, undoubtedly in large degree a weapon of retaliation against Washington, will inevitably and unfortunately go on until some new basis in economic relations is arrived at between the two countries.

A LOST RACE

TOWARD the end of his "History of the Goths," written A.D. 542, Jornandes, Bishop of Ravenna, has a final word to say about the remnant of the Alans, a people who came westward at about the same time as the Goths, Vandals and Huns. They settled, he says, in Little Moesia, which corresponds to the Dobrudja of today, that littoral of the Black Sea south of the Danube and ending at its mouth, for which Rumania and Bulgaria have contended ever since the break-up of the Turkish Empire in the last century. And he adds that his own grandfather was secretary of state to the king of that time, "as I was to his successor before my conversion."

He names his own father as Alanomoesis, so that the Bishop of Ravenna in 542 can fairly be called Jordan son of Alan. The same name, Jordan fitzAlan, crops up again about the year 1100, the bearer of it being a son of the founder of the family of FitzAlan in England which, after many vicissitudes, is still well to the fore. The survival is not accidental, but the assimilation of invading races by France has been so complete that distinctions of origin have long since been lost to memory. And yet the name of Theodoric, one of the Gothic kings, survives in Thierry, and that of another, Wafer, in an Irish family. Saint Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln toward the end of the twelfth century, and the Chevalier Bayard, can be assigned to one branch of the Alans who remained in France, DuGuesclin and probably John de Courcy to another.

At about the beginning of the Christian era the Alans were

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the advance guard of the fair-haired Western peoples in the continuous warfare against the dark-skinned races from the East. Not that their more remote origin was wholly Western, for although they had light hair and eyes, the Mongolian races knew of them in association with some far Eastern mountains of related name. However, by the time the Romans got to know of them, between the Sea of Azov and the Caspian Sea and on the steppes of Russia near the mouths of the great rivers, they had become the best of all fighters on horseback. It was they who brought to perfection the use of the lance in warfare. Even the corps of Polish Lancers, the nucleus of the Polish struggle for independence just prior to the last war, consciously traced their method back to these old warriors of the steppes.

Under pressure of the Goths, and still more of the Huns, they moved westward. The Romans encouraged them to settle in Pannonia (Hungary) in the fourth century, and about the year 400 legions of them had been incorporated in the Roman armies. It is told that in one battle, under Silicon, being placed in the front of the fight, they yielded to the shock of the barbarians, but came back later in the day to avenge their dead. Immediately afterward they were sent, as *Comites Alani,* into the Western Empire. Meantime, however, under pressure from the Huns, another contingent of them had joined the Goths and the Vandals and swept over Europe, never stopping until they had reached Spain, where they occupied Lusitania, a kingdom extending from Valencia on the Mediterranean westward to the Atlantic. Here they were decisively beaten by the Goths under Wallia, and Atace, their king, was killed. Some of them went then with the Vandals to Africa, where they set up the kingdom of the Vandals and Alans. Aetius, the Roman general, established another colony of them at Valence on the Rhone, which "they made the seat of their dominion," occupying, in time, the whole of a region eastward of Valence toward the mountains. Another group remained in the region about Lisbon. A third, and perhaps the most important, was sent to the aid of the crumbling empire in the territory from Orleans "vers le couchant," as Jornandes says—toward the sunset, which means into Brittany and what afterward was Normandy.

By this time they had become "mounted infantry," never forsaking their horses but forming a phalanx at the center when a battle began. This was their position under their king, Allan Sangipan, when the battle of Chalons began. Again they broke under the weight of Attila's charge, and because, when Aetius failed to send the orders Alan awaited, he had allowed the Huns to enter Orleans, he was suspected of favoring the Huns. Aetius must have thought otherwise, for after that he installed them in the strong places from the Sarthe to the sea, to hold in check the rebellious Bretons, or rather Armoricans. When the Romans left, this warfare became more bitter, under the Alan king, Eocaric. Finally the differences were composed, by mediation of Saint Germain of Auxerre, under threat of a new invasion from the north.

At this point the ostensible history of the Alans stops. "We find them in no place, but we encounter them everywhere" is the description applied to them by one of the old geographers, who lays this apparent instability to their "roving disposition." But it is significant that shortly thereafter there began a succession of rulers of Brittany who, whatever their given names, were known as Alains, just as, in Aquitania, there were twelve Williams whose real names might be Geoffrey or Peter. That these Alains and their relatives represented an amalgamation with the Armoricans and with the Britons who went there from England under pressure from the Saxons, must be true. Yet there was a distinction between that part of Brittany where the Breton tongue was used and those other parts where the Alan connection was strongest and where French was the language spoken.

It was in Poitou, however, that they left a mark which is imperishable. The legend of the Melusina, which will never be lost because it is one of the literary treasures of France, takes its origin in their traditions. When we first hear of them in Asia they had a goddess peculiar to themselves, a logical deity for the nature worship of the time. A part of their homeland was in a wooded district, which in certain seasons was inundated by the overflowing of the great Russian rivers. Their peculiar symbol, therefore, was a beautiful woman as to the upper half, representing the bountiful earth, and as to the lower half a water serpent, in tribute to the water. It was a serpent, not a fish. Melusina was not a mermaid. Her old names, Echidna, Evadne, both signifying the combination of earth and water, were in use at least up to the time of the crusades. For the rest, the Alans worshiped one god, who was for them the god of war. They had no temples; with the sword or spear in the ground before or beside the altar, all was ready. They despised any but a warlike death. They took the scalps of their enemies. They had no divisions of society, carrying the principle of equality to an extreme, and their only officials, the judges, were chosen from the wisest on that account only.

Seven hundred years after they had become Christian, Evadne reappeared. Raymond of Toulouse, according to the romance, one of the house of Lusignan in Poitou, by another version, married a beautiful woman who made it a condition that he should not see her on Saturdays. Whisperings and jealousy led him to break the promise, and he saw her in her bath, combing her hair before a hand mirror. But on perceiving that he had broken trust, and had discovered her obligation to the aquatic part of her nature, she glided out of the window, all serpent by this time, and was seen no more. She does return, and signifies her presence by three shrieks, whenever death threatens the head of the house of Lusignan. It is told of her that when still undiscovered she persuaded her husband, on at least one occasion, to go to the relief of her cousin, Alan of Vannes.

Melusina as her husband last looked upon her in her bath, with the comb and mirror, became the crest of Lusignan, and was adopted by all who could claim alliance with that house. The Valences, Valoines and Lusignans themselves, the Lexingtons, Laxtons, who carry the name in alteration, the Wallops and Byrons who came by it on the distaff side, all bear this crest, as did the Cusacks of Ireland and presumably the Listons of Limerick, the first of whom was a Lezignan. If we choose to regard this tale as only a variant of the legend of the swan, Apollo's bird, which went away in conditions not dissimilar, the fact remains that it was the Alan goddess who was chosen after all those centuries, and it was to the caves in the hills over beyond Valence, where the Alans were, that she is believed to have gone. Mr. Colum writes of the woman part of her as one of the best-known banshees of Ireland, mirror, comb and all; perhaps she really went there and lost the serpent part by contact with the soil.

There is another interesting bit about these people who lived beyond Valence. They came to be called Allemans, that is Germans, according to the pleasant way they had in Europe of dividing humanity into two classes, ourselves and strangers. The Saxons meant that when they called the ancient Britons

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"Welsh"; the Franks meant the same when they called the French-speaking Flanders people Wallons; the French meant it when they called these people Germans. Just back of Caen in Normandy there was a barony of Allemagne which is conceded to have been the home of a settlement of Alans, and these shared with their southern kinsmen the eagles of their shield. The southern Allemans had for their cry "Robur: Place a ma dame," and their neighbors had a saying that one of the desirable things in the world was the kinship of the Allemans.

This was because, as soon as one of the Allemans was affronted, all the heads of the various branches of the family met, and war against the offender was declared and put in motion instantly. At first they were all equal, but after one had married into French royalty they conceded the primacy to him. Like all good things, their solidarity of kin came to an end, but it made a profound impression while it lasted and that was for some centuries.

It seems reasonable to suppose that the eagle of their shield was a souvenir of those they had carried in the legions they formed for Rome. In their northern environment we again find that eagle, and while there, in the main, it is associated with place names, the bearers carried it far into England and later into Ireland, where it has become associated, through marriage, with some of the oldest Irish names.

There was one characteristic that did survive there in the north. After they had composed their differences with the Armoricans and Bretons, the two peoples strove for centuries to stave off absorption by the conquering Franks. All the great Breton families expressed in their crests the sense of their loss and something of their refusal to accept the inevitable. The FitzAlans used as a symbol of this a spear broken in two places. Others showed it by means of a spear or arrow transfixing a lion, a boar, a griffin, a dragon, a swan, etc. One can predicate at least a partial Breton origin to any family bearing a variant of this insignia. In the end they could not wait for the indicated return game, but went off to possess themselves of much of the best in England, and later on to found families in Ireland, which continue, there or elsewhere, notwithstanding Cromwell's addition of new injury to old. They are still roving, and did one but know it, one encounters them everywhere.

J. C. W.

Pilgrimage

I had set my foot on the first smooth step
of sleep
my drifting fingers dreamed against
the steep descending curve of stair
that sweeps the limpid eddies of its peace
deep
into the dim sweetness
of unearthly dreams. . . .

The white moon came,
and now
my shrinking eyes have widened with the ache
of light
my tightening fingers find and climb along
a white ascending rise of stair
that sends the winding spirals of its strife
high
into the strange brightness
of all-knowing pain.

CONSTANCE GAY MORENUS.

COMMUNICATIONS

EINSTEIN AND FREUD

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: I was very glad to see Mr. Victor S. von Szeliski's (hereafter to be called your correspondent) letter with regard to Einstein, if for no other reason than that it gives an opportunity to add something about Einstein. A German student from Berlin recently told me that Einstein attracts very little attention there. Some of his earlier work is appreciated but the University of Berlin has not been interested in his theory. That taken in conjunction with the tendency so outspoken in Einstein to air his views on nearly everything under the sun and a few other things besides—religion and politics and peace, and nearly always putting his foot in it when he does—would seem to indicate that he is one of the viewy people who are ready to explain anything and everything by a new-fangled theory of their own. The wonder is the publicity he gets, for his theories are so difficult of comprehension. There is an African in that woodpile, I suspect.

Your correspondent seems not to have realized that there was another part to my article besides that on Einstein. Only three people understand Einstein, and they are not so sure, and I am not one of them; but I know a lot about theories that have been advanced and capitalized by their authors in various ways, which proved after a time to have nothing to them. All sorts of intelligent people have fallen for them. But you need only read my book, "Cures," to find that distinguished scholarship even in a university professor is no sufficient guarantee against his being carried away by some alluring theory. They are duped by the score.

Science is not founded on authority. We do not accept scientific pronouncements because of the distinction of their authors but for the value of the proofs they present. No one's say-so has anything to do with the acceptance of scientific truth. The reasons that are given count. I quoted Professor Poor who, your correspondent graciously admits, is "certainly a scholar whom any university would be proud to have on its faculty," not for the authority that he is but because he declares that Einstein's claims are not supported by observations. Professor Poor surely can judge whether the observations so far made have any significance in confirming the Einstein theory. I am quite willing to be wrong with Poor.

Even if I were to accept the set of rules to establish a proposition suggested by your correspondent, there is no necessity for me to "undermine the authority of the experts who take the other side of the question." That would take volumes and then give us only authorities. What I have to say of Freud shows how easy it is for distinguished authorities to be led astray. Many of our most distinguished professors of psychology fell for Freud. How close lies the suggestion that distinguished astronomers and mathematicians might fall for Einstein though his proofs are lacking, and unless they come—and they have not come so far—Einstein will go the way of Freud. Like a good psychoneurologist, I was trying to prepare our folks for the possible shock they may have if that happens.

But I doubt whether your correspondent read anything about Freud in the article. When I touched his idol, Einstein, he was so up in arms that there should be anything said in derogation that he missed the rest of the article. He does not seem even to realize that because of some familiarity with psychology I deliberately changed the word of the astronomer, "illusions," to "delusions," which fits in better with the meaning intended.

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I suppose that your correspondent's reference to "the lumber room of outworn speculations already so crowded with persons and theories which flourished in the thirteenth, greatest of centuries," is meant to be a slam. Such slams used to be very common twenty-five years ago when the book was written, but it is a boost now, and in the English-speaking world the book is something of a classic and goes right on selling.

The end of your correspondent's article is a climax. His idol has been touched and he himself sympathetically touched to the quick. The very idea that anyone should suggest that Einstein's theory might be lacking in proof, though an authority so good (as he admits) as Professor Poor says that it is so lacking, disturbs him very much. Your correspondent cannot have his feelings harrowed up by finding anything in his journals that disagrees with him this way, so he has revamped that dear old-fashioned expression supposed to have gone out long since, "Stop my paper. I'll not be disturbed by reading things that disagree with me." Your correspondent phrases it, "If THE COMMONWEAL puts on any more such exhibitions it will speedily find itself deserted not only by its non-Catholic supporters but by many Catholic subscribers." Stop my paper if you disagree with my views hereafter.

JAMES J. WALSH.

P. S. I think that your correspondent accuses me of being young. Toward the end of his letter there is a little jumbling of ideals. I am sixty-five years young and still going strong. Time will cure my youth.

This is the first I have heard that we have to accept all that is in Saint Thomas Aquinas. How curious that he should go back to the thirteenth century in spite of the slams. The greatest of modern thinkers in that greatest of centuries, the thirteenth, had his limitations. He accepted the Ptolemaic system, and any modern astronomer is a better authority on that. The taking of interest was not permitted in his time, so that even a "Wall Street man" would probably be a better one to consult on any subject relating to it.

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR DIONYSUS

Limerick, Me.

TO the Editor: The amusing article on "Christmas Cards for Dionysus," in your issue of December 10, intrigued me so much that I asked the buyer of our local "woman's shop" if she had ever seen any maroon monkeys in futuristic positions of torture on Christmas cards. From the appearance of the stock on her counters and in Portland, and what she said, I judge that that particular fad has not yet traveled "down East."

If you think your contributor may not have seen the following clipping, it may cheer his soul to observe that according to this observer's conclusions the modernistic card is very much in the minority among the millions on sale:

> TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* This evening I had a moment in which to examine with some care the thirty-six Christmas cards that form the advance guard of this year's reminders of pleasant thoughts in the minds of my friends. They convinced me that neither the advances of science nor the revolutions in art have changed materially the predominant popular choice in expression of sentiment. Here is a tabulation of the subjects depicted on these cards:
>
> Landscapes with snow displaying figures in old-fashioned dress, 2; waits, 2; tallyhos, 5; mail coach, 1; Holy Family, 1; landscapes with sheep, 1; campanile, 1; landscapes, snow scene without figures, 3; landscape, modernistic treatment, 1; desert with camels, 1; full rigged ship, 1; basket of flowers, old-fashioned arrangement, 2; old-fashioned fanciful figure, 1; coat of arms, 1; engravings of modern business buildings, 3; original humorous portraits of the senders, 1; street scene in French provincial city, 1; rose window in French cathedral, 1; engraving of country residence, 1; conventional modernistic design, 1; conventional old-fashioned design, 1; original humorous drawing of a cutter, with appropriate text, 1; bringing in the yule log, snow scene with men dragging sled, 2.
>
> Not an airplane, not an automobile, not a radio set, scarcely a print to suggest that the conveniences and inconveniences of the twentieth century have changed the mode of observing the winter holiday; yet these cards are mostly from town dwellers and all from persons who intelligently enjoy every advantage that modernity has conferred on us!
>
> Truly, the heart does not seek to keep abreast the head.
>
> P. M. L.
>
> Scarsdale, December 22.

I'm not sure but a little drama enacted this holiday season in Limerick may also be a cheerful thing to tell you, as indicating that things may not be so bad after all. A minature unemployment problem exists here just now, and the family that happened to be hardest struck by it was that of a young fellow with a wife and three children under the age of five and another on the way, who lost his job in the mill some time before Thanksgiving. Then the wife came down with an acute attack of pneumonia. The neighbors came in and took care of her and looked after the children for the first few days, but the case became so serious that something evidently would have to be done at once. The father of the family used to work for our local garage man, who after discussing the situation with his wife came over with his car, rolled the sick woman up in blankets and took her to his own home, where his wife, having parked her own little girl with a friend, is still taking care of her. The children were distributed between two neighboring families where there are four or five children apiece, the garage man gave the father a job, and somebody else took up a subscription in the village and raised about $200 for the family, who by the way are Catholics and all of the people who came to their rescue are Protestants. Maybe this really shows as true a spirit of Christmas as if they had sent to the Bernardini Company and bought a crib, but I don't know. There is no servant problem here because practically nobody has any servants, so that upsetting the house to take in a pneumonia case with really no claim whatever on the volunteer nurse is a little more of a stunt than it would be in some other well-to-do families.

LOUISE LAMPREY.

A CORRECTION, NOT A COMPLAINT

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: I admit that my typing is bad and my handwriting worse; so I suppose it was my own fault that my article on "The Plight of the Poet" in your issue of January 7 contained three misprints: The word "vigorous" (about the middle of the first column on page 268) should be "rigorous"; "transition" (in the fourth line from the bottom of the second column on page 268) should be "tradition"; and the "sorrowful" (in the fifth line from the top of the first column on page 269) should be "scornful." I hope your readers could guess in each case what the word should be.

These errors in any event were not so disastrous as others I have known to occur. Anybody addicted to the "cosmic" knows how often it turns into the "comic"; and I knew a chaplain in the war who instead of "debouching" was caught debauching in a shell-hole. Once, too, I found that, when I wanted to suggest my belief in the immortality of a certain very distinguished lady poet, I had actually credited her with immorality. The slips in your pages pale into insignificance before these.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

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THE PLAY

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

Five Star Final

OF ALL the many current plays which outrun good taste in the use of blasphemy and other alleged forms of realism, "Five Star Final" stands conspicuous as almost the only one which blazes with something approaching a crusading honesty. I do not say that the management has produced it in that spirit. The play partakes in a curious way of precisely the sordid quality of the thing it castigates—namely tabloid journalism. Like the many "plays with a moral" which spend most of their time in a literal picturing of vice, "Five Star Final" is heavily salted and peppered with incidents, situations and wisecracks which appeal to the tabloid mind. Nevertheless, the honest anger of the author, Louis Weitzenkorn, breaks through at frequent intervals with astonishing vigor. He lashes about him with a formidable bastinado. Its stinging blows land where they should, and draw blood. If there were the least hope that many of the tabloid addicts in the audience would stop their daily contribution to the publishers' coffers, then the good in the play might outbalance the bad. But the instinct of self-defense works the other way. Everyone in an audience always hopes his neighbor will take the lesson to heart—just as every woman who saw "Craig's Wife" hoped Mrs. Jones, next door, would see the play and reform. In spite of Mr. Weitzenkorn's obvious intentions, "Five Star Final" will probably succeed entirely because it is, in itself, a breath from the tabloid composing rooms.

The acid story of this play concerns the owner and the managing editor of a New York tabloid, and the results which follow the former's decision to run a "human interest" serial on the present life of a woman who, twenty years earlier, killed a man for betraying her. This woman is now married. No one except her husband knows her identity. Her daughter is about to be married to a "worth while" young man. But Hinchcliffe, the tabloid's owner, needs more circulation. By raking up the ashes of the old Voorhees case, he can—so he unctuously proclaims—point a moral for young and old alike. Randall, his managing editor, is getting a bit sick of the entire racket. But under Hinchcliffe's orders, he proceeds to set the machinery of exploitation to work. First he uncovers the present name and abode of Nancy Voorhees. Then he sends his "religious editor"—in the form of an ex-minister—on the trail, accompanied by a brisk girl reporter fresh from Chicago. They unearth the fact that Nancy's daughter is about to be married—whereupon the tabloid decides that it must point a further moral and show up the effort of an ex-murderess to palm off her daughter on an unsuspecting family. This news breaks the day before the wedding. Succinctly, it results in the suicide of both Nancy and her distracted husband.

As the play consists of twenty-one scenes, it is obvious that the author has selected the panoramic method of conveying the turbulent impressions of a city with its small homes, its sordid flats, its speakeasies, and the humming activity of a city staff at work. The scenic design by Dodd Ackerman is thoroughly ingenious, with three stages and revolving scenery, so that one center of action blends into another. At one moment, when Nancy is frantically telephoning her appeal for mercy to the newspaper office, all three stages are lighted at once. The cumulative effect is surprisingly coördinated. This triple scene has genuine impact.

Among the factors contributing to the mood of honest scorn is the acting of an extremely capable cast, headed by Arthur Byron as the managing editor, trying to fight off the ghosts of his own conscience. Merle Maddern is, of course, the persecuted Nancy Voorhees Townsend, and a sincere and beautiful job she makes of the part, with sensitive and able assistance by Malcolm Duncan as her husband and Frances Fuller as her daughter. A number of minor "type" characters are particularly well taken. In general, the theme of the Roman holiday in crime and murder which the tabloids provide is handled with a bitter ferocity which does credit to the author's knowledge of his field. (At the Cort Theatre.)

The Man in Possession

THE chief source of moral infection in the theatre does not lie in the "strong" plays, nor even in the current gross realism. It is to be found in precisely the same place as during the last ten years, namely, in the light comedies which, with gracious manner and honeyed words, continuously preach the gospel that sexual immorality is a gay and humorous matter, to be taken seriously only by the prudes and the unsophisticated. "The Man in Possession," fresh from London, is a case in point.

An artificial and improbable comedy at best—based on the point in English law which permits the sheriff's officer to place a man in a debtor's house, to see that nothing is removed, pending payment of the debt—this play simply portrays the way in which an English lady of adventure accepts the familiar attentions of the young man placed in her house. Their decision in the last act to marry and make a new start does not alter the situation in the least, except for those who like to be fooled by such last-moment dramatic hypocrisy. The essential character of the comedy is merely emphasized by the stiffly artificial airiness with which the wholly English cast carries it off.

The feminine lead in this exhibition of British wit and humor is taken by Isabel Jeans. Judging from the parts she has played in England, she might be considered a combination of Jane Cowl and Judith Anderson. But judging entirely from her performance, she is a vision of considerable loveliness, painfully distorted at frequent intervals by affectation and mannerism, not all of which seems to be characterization of the part itself. Playing opposite her is Leslie Banks, who does creditably enough, without a touch of inspiration. Herman Phelps speaks many indignant lines with all the fervor of a wooden soldier on parade. One excellent comedy bit is imparted by David Keir, and Tracy Holmes and J. Neil More make their small parts reasonably conspicuous. Frances Ruttledge as the harassed mother of a wayward son does easily the best acting of the entire troupe.

Since the play merits no special consideration, possibly a word on the modern school of English acting may not be amiss. It is not so many, many days since English acting was associated with the crystal utterance, the apt characterization and the sly humor of the Cyril Maudes and the George Arlisses and the bravely intelligent attack of the Forbes-Robertsons. All this has now largely ceded place to a younger school, very nearly inarticulate in their diction, upright as ramrods in their purposeful posing and very nearly as humorous as a Kipling ballad of empire. Certain syllables in each word are attacked with a ferocity which drowns out the whispered tag ends.

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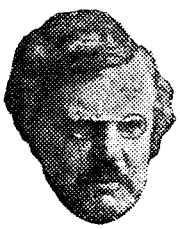

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Unbending dignity is taken as a symbol of refinement. Humor, when it does appear, rarely flashes. It merely drops, like water from the fingers' ends. Exceptions are numerous. But the rule is becoming a bit monotonous. (At the Booth Theatre.)

Boccaccio

THERE may well be cause for comment in the fact that of all the novelties and revivals given during the last two or three years at the Metropolitan Opera House, the one which has received the greatest popular response both in applause and demand for tickets has been Franz Von Suppe's "Boccaccio." Is the reason a growing weariness with grand opera, a form of music which despite its brilliant past is today quite unmistakably in the doldrums as far as any new creative work is concerned, or is it that the present revival of this fifty-year-old comic opera is of outstanding merit? It is true that Mme. Jeritza in the title part proved that she is still a true queen of Viennese operetta, that Mr. Meader's Scalza is one of the finest bits of comic impersonation of our generation, that Mr. Kirchoff is a light opera comedian rather than a Wagnerian tenor, that Miss Fleischer is as charming in the lighter as in the heavier forms of lyric art, that Mr. Windheim, Mr. Schuetzendorf and Miss Telva are fully as pleasing in operetta as in Wagner, and that Mr. Bodanzsky knows the spirit of his Suppe and knows how to impart his knowledge to his orchestra. And so we can answer the latter question in the affirmative, despite the fact that the Metropolitan's auditorium is too large for operetta. Yes. The revival was delightfully accomplished even though there were stray voices who bewailed the long past days of the Casino, and even one distinguished critic who thought Suppe's music balderdash. As for the opinion of the latter gentleman, music which can delight a New York audience as ecstatically in 1931 as it did a Vienna audience in 1879, has received the accolade of the foremost of all critics—time. Yet perhaps the real significance wasn't in the performance itself.

Recent years at the Metropolitan, though they have kept the financial balance on the right side of the ledger, can scarcely be called exciting. While the performances have been fully equal and probably superior to those of any other opera house in the world, there has been something lacking which existed twenty years ago. It is not Mr. Gatti-Casazza, or the orchestra, or even the artists who have been at fault. It has been the time. It would be absurd to assert that grand opera as an art form has come to an end, but it is certain that we are now in a non-creative period, and when in any art the creative impulse fails, vitality of interpretation likewise diminishes.

Now the performance of "Boccaccio" had this very vitality. The artists gave their best and enjoyed giving it, and the audience responded. Is it not that after all operetta is far closer to the American spirit than the broader form of opera? Is it not that, though "Boccaccio" is Viennese, its humor and the lightness of its music really went home to the hearts of the audience? Why shouldn't we in the future have many more such operas? The music of Offenbach and Suppe and Strauss and Lecocq is surely not inferior to that of Leoncavallo and Giordano, simply because it happens to be lighter. And in grand opera there is nothing sacrosanct anyhow. As an art it has always been suspect, and though it has contained works of supreme genius, its average has been none too high except for purposes of entertainment. There is absolutely no reason, except the size of the auditorium, why the Metropolitan should not give works of lighter nature. May we hereafter have at least one added to the repertory each season.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

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BOOKS

Ulsterite Individualism

Cyrus Hall McCormick: Seed-time, 1809-1856, by W. T. Hutchinson. New York: The Century Company. $5.00.

AMONG the Irish Presbyterians who were driven by tithes, increased rentals and lean seasons, from Ulster to Pennsylvania in 1735 were Thomas and Elizabeth (Carruth) McCormick. Their son Robert and his Scotch-Irish bride removed to the Valley of Virginia where land was cheaper and the Ulsterites no less numerous nor more tolerant of creedal distinctions (1770). Here Robert farmed and grew prosperous enough to buy more land and raise more Negroes. And a second Robert married the daughter of an Ulsterite immigrant, and their son was Cyrus Hall McCormick. Young Cyrus aided his father at Walnut Grove in the invention of an improved plow, in making whisky, in operating a smelting furnace, in building hemp-breaks of their own design, and in fairly successful efforts to make a reaper which proved more successful than earlier English and American models concerning which the McCormicks in the isolated hills of Virginia probably never heard. At any rate Bell's English reaper failed on the English market at a time when cheap Irish labor made farm machinery an expensive luxury in Britain. Soon Cyrus with Ulsterite individualism was on his own, and his reaper, unlike his father's was a marked success within a few years after its initial exhibition in 1831.

Professor Hutchinson thereupon considers the mechanical development of the machine and the family squabbles over the successful reaper, which Cyrus's brothers and sisters would ascribe to the father for monetary reasons not hard to fathom. This is tedious reading, and the facts, while important to those concerned, are of little interest to the general reader or even to the student of American industrial history. The conflict between Obed Hussey and McCormick, and the war to the knife between their rival reapers, are described with skilful thoroughness. In 1844 the McCormick reaper invaded the West where land was cheap, labor scarce, and prices encouraged agricultural expansion. Three years later McCormick with astonishing perspicacity selected the growing village of Chicago as his headquarters, about the time that William Ogden and Stephen A. Douglas were creating a railroad and shipping metropolis at Old Fort Dearborn.

And McCormick's factory grew with Chicago and the West, as his belief in the Democratic party became more intense under the spell of Douglas. And McCormick prospered despite difficulties with relatives and business associates, especially after his reaper and mower won renown in the Crystal Palace exhibition in London (1851). Not only by the mechanical superiority of his product, but by McCormick's aggressive sales policy on time and on farmers' notes—then good—can one account for his phenomenal success. Again his belief in himself was as orthodox as his Presbyterianism or his hostility to a high tariff which could hardly help a business unaffected by foreign competition. The country might be in a turmoil under Buchanan and Lincoln, whom Cyrus regarded as a calamity, but the reapers peacefully harvested grain, as Father J. B. Duerinck of the Shawnee Mission in "bleeding Kansas" wrote to the great Cyrus. The latter's income of $300,000 per year only drove him to manufacture more machines as the Civil War raised prices and increased the demand for machinery, when conscription lessened the supply of cheap labor.

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NEXT WEEK

The venal activity of bitter and malicious opponents of the Church sometimes seems to us insufficiently countered. THE HOUR OF POWER, by John C. Cahalan, jr., however is testimony of a most modern champion of the Faith and of the heartening response there is to truth and fairness. . . . CHESTERTON ON DEMOCRACY, by Charles Willis Thompson, discusses some comparisons and conclusions that are revealing of modern social conditions. . . . "Another Cinderella has risen from her dusty place, and that most covetable of all crowns—a halo—is hovering now above the head of a Scottish scavenger's daughter," says May Rita O'Rourke in her story of MARGARET SINCLAIR: "the strange and true fairy-tale of the saint in an age at once unbelieving and credulous.". . . CATHOLIC HISTORIANS MEET, by James J. Walsh, gives a comprehensive report of the fine scholarship demonstrated at the recent meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association in Boston. This is an article which is of general interest to Catholics and all who are interested in Catholic activities, as well as of special interest to historians. . . . SOUP KITCHENS AND BREAD LINES, by Reverend John O'Grady, Director of The Catholic Charities, is an important statement on the harm that may be done to existing agencies for the just and orderly care of the destitute by sensation-seeking novelties in the present emergency. . . . A SHRINE OF ALICE MEYNELL, by Katherine Tynan will be concluded in this issue. This reflects a most gracious picture of a rural and literary life which in our motorized age seems to have been so largely lost. It is an appreciation of beauty that is destroyed by restlessness and of a delicacy of spirit which grows in quietude.

Bolshevism Entrenched

The Russian Experiment, by Arthur Feiler. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.00.

PERHAPS there is no subject among the many pressing upon the attention of thoughtful readers which has a greater claim for consideration than Russian Bolshevism. Linked together for weal or for woe as are all the peoples of the world today, so that what might seem to be purely local conditions or events in one country will affect other nations despite all their attempts to isolate themselves from such results, it is obvious that so gigantic and pervasive an influence as is that of Bolshevism becomes a matter of great importance even to countries which seem most detached from the conditions and factors which constitute what the author of one of the most useful books on the subject terms "The Russian Experiment."

Mr. Feiler is a German writer. In his own country, where the subject of Bolshevism is of acute concern, his book has attained a very large circulation. The impartiality of his study is evident. It is impossible for a reader to find a single phrase expressly denouncing or praising Bolshevism, either in its theory or its results. He observed very closely while he was in Russia. He studied his subject thoroughly. It is now thirteen years since the Russian revolution—which came after three years of war against Germany and Austria, and was followed by several years of civil war, the Reds against the Whites—and with the recent triumph of Stalin and his following within the Communist régime, the Five-Year Plan promises to be a decisive test of the "experiment."

In using that word, Mr. Feiler implicitly admits what also he explicitly states many times: namely, that it would be presumptuous for anybody to say either yes or no to the great question: Will Bolshevism succeed? "Any such answer would in truth be a preconceived opinion derived not from a capacity for impartial judgment, but from the belief held at the outset." There can, however, be little doubt, the author believes, that even if Bolshevism for years to come should fail in one of its primary objects, which is to spread the faith and practice of its system to other countries, and eventually to the whole world, it is so firmly entrenched in Russia itself, behind its Red army, with all power centralized in a dictatorship, that it is practically impregnable. It can await its world task while other nations prepare for the advent of Bolshevism by their own follies and failures, which Bolshevistic propaganda exacerbates, or even provokes.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS.

History with a Thesis

Religious Aspects of the Conquest of Mexico, by Charles S. Braden. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press. $3.50.

THIS BOOK is an ambitious attempt to evaluate the conversion and religious psychology of the Indians of Mexico during the sixteenth century. At the same time, Professor Braden, as it appears from the last chapter, aims at a wider synthesis and proves to his own satisfaction, at least, that in Mexico Catholicism suffered a sea change and today the religion of the Mexican Indian is a paganized Catholicism.

He starts his investigation from the principle, borrowed from the anthropologists and which he considers of universal application, that one culture never wholly displaces another; interactions and interpenetrations take place so that the resultant is a blend, facilitated by resemblances, and not a substitution.

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This view is fast becoming the atmosphere in which much of the current discussion on the religious and cultural problems of Mexico takes place, and Professor Braden desires to bring it into the realm of established truth by examining critically the documents of the period which describe what actually happened when the Catholic Spaniards took over the direction of affairs.

To meet Professor Braden on the anthropological plane, it is pertinent to observe that the approach to a study of cultures is by way of institutions, their principles, their organization, their functions and social values. This is quite a study and would have to be extended beyond the sixteenth century for a balance to be struck. It is interesting to note, by the way, that this is just the point of which Professor Braden makes complaint in regard to Father Cuevas's monumental "La Historia de la Iglesia en México." It is limited too closely to "institutional" history. This error Professor Braden does not entirely avoid himself, but he does so sufficiently often to leave the anthropologically-minded reader wondering where the cultural contrasts and blendings can possibly come in.

He claims that there are five sets of facts easily to be ascertained from the source documents on the state of religion in Mexico in the sixteenth century: (1) the quality of religion in Spain; (2) the pagan religion of the Mexican Indians; (3) religious activities of Cortés and the early missionaries; (4) conditions favoring and hindering conversion; (5) results. The first receives a summary, nominalistic treatment, in which such terms as "fanaticism," the "persecutions of the Inquisition," etc., serve as an exposition of the doctrines and institutions of the Church in Spain. The bibliography on this section evinces none of the scholarship so highly praised by Professor Isaac Cox in the Foreword. The summary of the pagan religion is more complete, though not adequate, and in the third and fourth sections the plan of Cuevas is rather generally followed with many quotations from him. Why Cuevas, who has that interesting missing link, "the Jesuit Catholic standpoint," should be worthy of credence on some points but not "convincing" on the charge that Archbishop Zumárraga and the Friars destroyed "many invaluable ancient writings," is not made clear. As Father Cuevas not only made his own study of the documents on this question, but analyzed the contributions of García Icazbalceta on the same point, it would seem worth Professor Braden's scholarship to have analyzed the Cuevas criticism.

There is always in the background of the interpretation the point to be proved, that the missionaries did not convert the Indians. The fact that the missionaries were keen observers and discovered immediately the tremendous nature of their task, the difficulties confronting them and the shortcomings of both Spaniards and Indians, and frankly commented upon these, seems in some mysterious way to offer to Professor Braden a proof supreme of his thesis. In this point lies the whole failure of his argument. What he sets out to prove is in the nature of a metaphysical discussion, but for this lofty synthesis he does not realize his own shortcomings. One of these is his rather naive reliance on contemporary documents to give him the whole of his story. He would hardly attempt the synthesis of Mr. Coolidge's administration from the contemporary documents alone, even supposing he had all of them. Why then does he not think that documents contemporary with the spiritual conquest of Mexico, however critically validated, would not present similar difficulties?

The failure to ask this question renders the last section on the results of the conversion, so pitiable. This will be the most read, though in it Professor Braden reveals his bankrupt scholarship. Here he produces his proofs for the existence of a

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paganized Catholicism—all opinions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century observers, and as such worthless. His investigation closes with 1600; his first proof of the final result begins with Prescott. Now by 1600, at the most liberal estimate, there had been three generations of Indians evangelized, though not in all of Mexico, as serious missionary effort in the northern regions did not begin until the next century. Between 1600 and Prescott quite a few generations of Indians had been born. Does Professor Braden mean to imply that these obtained their knowledge of Christianity through biological heredity, or were they taught as the first three generations had been? The biologists themselves would say the latter. Hence if he had read attentively not more than the five volumes of Cuevas, he would have learned of the progress of evangelization in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and of the factors which were introduced in the eighteenth which ruined the work of the sixteenth and seventeenth and carried the ruin on into the nineteenth.

Under such conditions and such neglect on the part of the Mexican government, it is indeed true that what has resulted for many of the Indians, but not for all (for the Indians were of varying levels of barbarism), is a relapse into some of their pagan practices and beliefs; though the tradition of the Catholicism they were once taught has not entirely died. It is this condition which Professor Braden is pleased to call a paganized Catholicism. This situation is a natural development and one to be expected, given the conditions existing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But such conditions do not affect the Catholic religion which is what it has always been since the days of its Founder and what it will be again for the Indians when the Mexican government permits the Church freely to teach them all that Catholicism has to offer, with time given for them to assimilate it. Under such conditions the Mexican Indian is Catholic, despite Professor Braden.

MARIE R. MADDEN.

Science for the Non-Scientist

Living Africa: A Geologist's Wanderings, by Bailey Willis. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, Incorporated. $4.00.

THAT famous character, the "average man," knows that Africa is a strange continent, but he generally does not know why. He knows that it is the abode of many animals that do not now exist elsewhere; he may have hunted there for strange beasts and noted the lack of navigable rivers, the difficulties of transportation, and the vast plateaus that rise from the level of the sea in giant steps. A critical study of the map will show him that, excepting the Atlas in the north—a continuation of the Alpine ranges of Europe—the second largest continent lacks the long systems of folded mountains that characterize other lands. But he does not know how these facts add to the puzzle of how Mother Earth built her surface forms.

The strange is often the key to the ordinary. The lake district of eastern central Africa in which the Nile and the Congo have their source, is strange because the long narrow valleys, known as rift valleys, were not formed, as are ordinary valleys, by the persistent gnawing of a river at its bed. They lie between the vast plateaus and, beneath the surface of Lake Tanganyika, the valley floor plunges downward 1,600 feet below the level of the distant ocean. To explain these valleys one will probably have to explain why Africa differs from the other continents, and the riddle of the continents themselves. So the Carnegie Institute of Washington authorized an expedi-

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tion to the lake district which is also a region of earthquakes and of giant volcanoes, both active and quiet.

Dr. Bailey Willis was sent. He is a graduate of the early school of geological explorers in the United States. A man of many years and wide travels. A sound scientist with youthful enthusiasm, who, besides the detailed report of the expedition which he will turn in to the society that backed him, has written this travel book for the non-scientist. The main part of the book is a narrative of his wanderings and comprises the substance of letters written while in the field. Because he turns ever and again to the puzzle he was sent to solve, and relates the scenery to its probable causes, it sounds a different note from other African travel books. It is well-written and interesting.

The first and last chapters, called respectively "The Question" and "The Answer," are more strictly scientific. The first sets forth the puzzle of Africa, the previous explanations that have been advanced, and the reasons for seeking another one. It is full of human touches and easily understandable. The last presents the author's conclusions. It avoids scientific terms and, though it is hard for the reviewer who can read between the lines, to judge how much the "average man" will learn from it, he believes that it will be a good deal.

WILLIAM M. AGAR.

Second Best of a First-Rater

As I Lay Dying, by William Faulkner. New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, Incorporated. $2.50.

ARNOLD BENNETT has said of William Faulkner, "He is an American who writes like an angel." If one stops to think what Bennett's real opinion of angels undoubtedly is, one immediately perceives that his remark about Faulkner is merely another sly British dig. On the other hand if one truly believed in angels, one might well say on the evidence of Faulkner's earlier novel, "The Sound and the Fury," that here was a writer who was a dark angel, one of the fallen, seeing humans implacably marked for hell and life merely an anteroom to inferno—with the curious exception that the dark people, the colored people, whom the author portrays, are tender, sweet-natured, compassionate, humorous, human, at times positively angelic. He could see the others at times in sudden startling attitudes of innocence, but only briefly, as though to give poignance to the horribleness of their destinies. He could outmatch Poe in the creation of grewsome atmospheres and make the macabre imaginations of Harper and Brothers' pet mental monster, Julian Green, seem like schoolboy essays. And curiously there clung about his work an angelic quality: he was never merely a misanthrope, a Dreiser or Sinclair Lewis. The darkness into which he plunged was full of suggestion of exquisite lost beauty. His was not the facile hopelessness of cynicism, but a wild despairing wail for a possible heaven lost.

By contrast, "As I Lay Dying" is an empty shell, a mere work of art. The writing is first class, sometimes inspired. But it is a disappointment. It leads one to suspect that the success of "The Sound and the Fury" induced the writer to sit down and make his newly discovered talents labor. The picture the new novel portrays of a queer backwoods family, is accurately done, but one constantly wonders if one is interested. There is good observation, but no thrilling revelation of inner mysteries. One hopes that this is merely an interlude in a maturing talent and that Mr. Faulkner will achieve more balance of perception of good and evil in white people.

FREDERIC THOMPSON.

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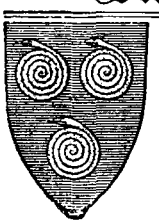

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Briefer Mention

The Water Gypsies, by A. P. Herbert. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Incorporated. $2.50.

ESPECIALLY delightful are the chapters of the first half of Mr. Herbert's latest novel. Here in his depiction of life on the English canals, he has splendid scope for his whimsicality and his humor. In Fred and Jane and Lily, and in Ernest, the young Communist, and in Mr. Bryan, the younger son turned painter, we have a delightful quintet whose characters and adventures bring forth that rarest of emotions among Georgian fictional figures—sympathy. Up to the middle of the book Mr. Herbert is apparently engaged in having a good time and in giving his readers a share of it. Life with him is richly colored and richly enjoyed, and moves onward amusingly, surprisingly and vitally. It is, in short, as a nineteenth-century Dickens purged of sentimentalism would write. And then just as we are saying delightedly to ourselves that even the England of George V can be merry, Mr. Herbert tells us that it isn't. And to prove it he helps us to generous portions of seductions and even a murder, and at the end tops it off with a modified cynicism. And though some of these latter scenes are well and even poignantly done, there are stretches of boredom. In insisting that he too is "modern," Mr. Herbert hasn't proved that he is alive. He proved that rather in the very portions which are not "modern." For it is in these portions that he is far more nearly universal. Had "The Water Gypsies" fulfilled the expectations of the first hundred pages, it would have been a novel indeed!

The Blessed Trinity, by the Most Reverend Downey; introduction by the Most Reverend Neil McNeil. New York: The Macmillan Company. 75 cents.

THE ARCHBISHOP of Liverpool has long been known as one of the brilliant apologists of the Church, and it is with great wisdom that the editor of the Treasury of Faith series has assigned the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity to this learned prelate. There is a general want of literature on the subject of the Trinity in English, most preachers and writers believing that it is a subject too difficult to initiate to the popular mind. Dr. Downey has taken the consecrated terms of that dogma, such as procession and spiration and relations and missions, and made them clear and intelligible to even the most ordinary readers. Catholics who are seeking for some answer to the modern belief that God dwells in solitary isolation and bliss will find it in this clear exposition of the Trinity. God is not alone, and for that reason is never solitary. From all eternity He has enjoyed infinite communion with Life and Truth and Love, which are not mere metaphysical abstractions but persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

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